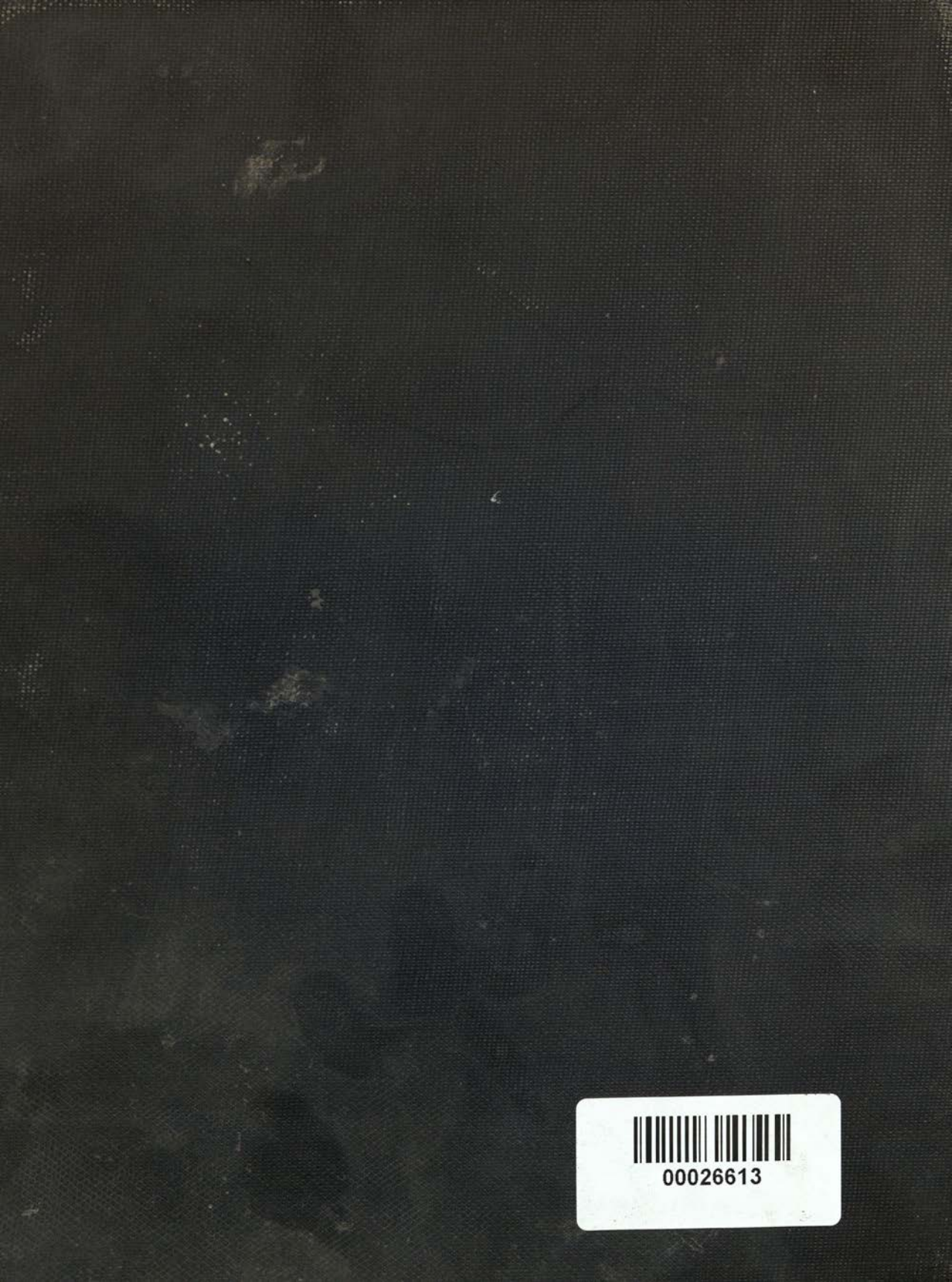
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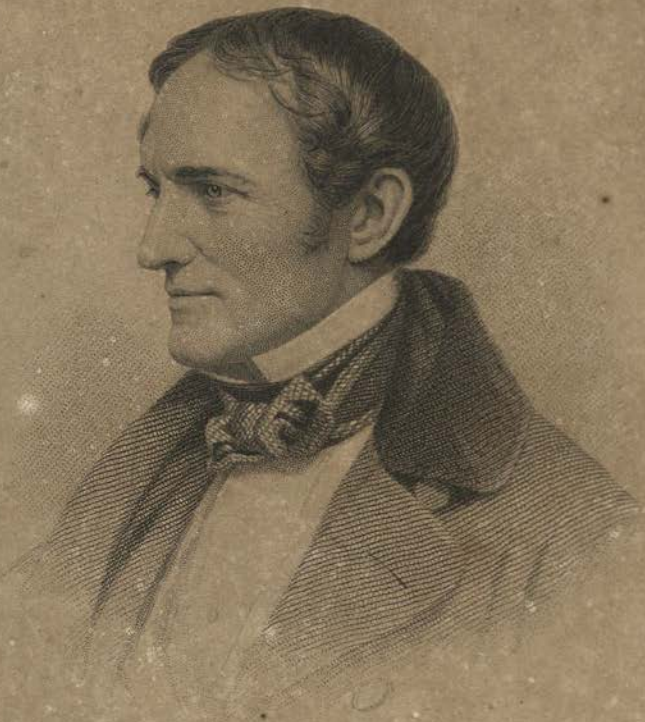

LIFE

OF

WILLIAM HICKLING PRESCOTT

BY

GEORGE TICKNOR

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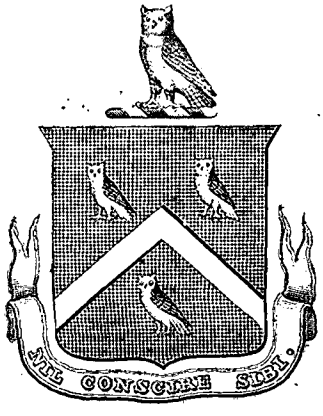

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TO

WILLIAM HOWARD GARDINER

AND

WILLIAM AMORY.

WE are more than once mentioned together in the laſt teſtamentary diſpoſitions of our friend, as perſons for whom he felt a true regard, and to whoſe affection and fidelity he, in ſome reſpects, intruſted the welfare of thoſe who were deareſt to him in life. Permit me, then, to aſſociate your names with mine in this tribute to his memory.

GEORGE TICKNOR.

Prefatory Notice.

THE following Memoir has been written in part payment of a debt which has been accumulating for above half a century. But I think it right to add, that my friend counted upon me, in caſe I ſhould ſurvive him, to prepare ſuch a ſlight ſketch of his literary life as he ſuppoſed might be expected,—that, ſince his death, his family, and I believe the public, have deſired a biographical account of him ampler than his own modeſty had deemed appropriate,—and that the Maſſachuſetts Hiſtorical Society, who early did me the honor of directing me to prepare a notice of their lamented aſſociate ſuch as it is cuſtomary to inſert in their official proceedings, have been content to accept the preſent Memoir as a ſubſtitute. It is, therefore, on all accounts, offered to the public as a tribute to his memory, the preparation of which I ſhould not have felt myſelf at liberty to refuſe even if I had been leſs willing to undertake it.

But if, after all, this Memoir ſhould fail to ſet the author

of the "Ferdinand and Iſabella" before thoſe who had not the happineſs to know him perſonally, as a man whoſe life for more than forty years was one of almoſt conſtant ſtruggle, — of an almoſt conſtant ſacrifice of impulſe to duty, of the preſent to the future, — it will have failed to teach its true leſſon, or to preſent my friend to others as he ſtood before the very few who knew him as he was.

PARK STREET, BOSTON, November, 1863.

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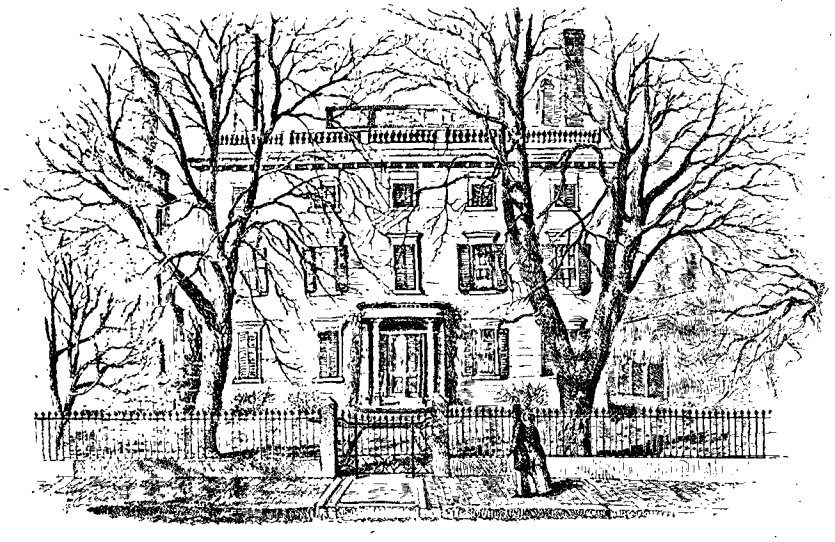

CHAPTER I.

1796–1811.

Birth and Parentage. — Early Training. — Removal to Boſton. — Dr. Gardiner's School. — Life at Home. — Love of Books. — Difficulty of obtaining them. — Boſton Athenæum. — William S. Shaw. — Favorite Books. — Studies. — Early Friendſhip. — Amuſements. — Enters College.

1796.

Birth.

WILLIAM HICKLING PRESCOTT was born in Salem, New England, on the fourth day of May, ſeventeen hundred and ninety-ſix.[1]

Father and mother.

His father, then thirty-four years old, — a perſon of remarkable manly beauty, and great dignity and gentleneſs of character, — was already in the fluſh of his early ſucceſs at the bar, where he ſubſequently roſe to much eminence and honor. His mother, five years younger,

[1] For an account of the Preſcott Family, ſee Appendix (A).

CHAP. I.
1796 – 1800.
ÆT. 1 – 4.

was a woman of great energy, who ſeemed to have been born to do good, and who had from her youth thoſe unfailing ſpirits which belong to the original temperament of the very few who have the happineſs to poſſeſs them, and which, in her caſe, were controlled by a good ſenſe and by religious convictions, that made her preſence like a benediction in the ſcenes of ſorrow and ſuffering, which, during her long life, it was her choſen vocation to frequent. They had been married between two and three years when William was born to them, inheriting not a few of the prominent characteriſtics of each. He was their ſecond child; the firſt, alſo a ſon, having died in very early infancy.

House where born.

The family of Mr. and Mrs. Preſcott was always a happy one, — reſpected and loved by thoſe who came within the reach of its influence. Their pleaſant, hoſpitable houſe in Salem is no longer ſtanding; but the ſpot it occupied is well remembered, and is pointed out to ſtrangers with pride, as the one where the future hiſtorian was born. Its ſite is now that of "Plummer Hall"; — a building erected for literary and ſcientific purpoſes, from funds bequeathed by the lady whoſe name it bears, and who was long a friend of the Preſcott family.[2]

Home training.

William's earlieſt education was naturally in the hands of his affectionate and active mother, his great obligations to whom he always loved to acknowledge, and from whom, with ſlight exceptions, it was his happineſs never to be ſeparated ſo long as they both lived. He felt, to the laſt, that her influence upon him had been one of the chief bleſſings of his life. On the afternoon of her death he ſpoke of it to me, as a guiding impulſe for which he could not be too grateful.

[2] Only a year before his death, the hiſtorian was invited to be preſent at the dedication of "Plummer Hall." He was not able to attend; but, in reply to the invitation, he ſaid: "I need not aſſure you that I take a ſincere intereſt in the ceremonies of the day, and I have a particular intereſt in the ſpot which is to be covered by the new edifice, from its having been that on which I firſt ſaw the light. It is a pleaſant thought to me, that, through the enlightened liberality of my deceaſed friend, Miſs Plummer, it is now to be conſecrated to ſo noble a purpoſe."

Miſs Higginſon's ſchool.

But, like the children of moſt of the perſons who conſtituted the ſociety in Salem to which his family belonged, he was ſent to a ſchool for the very young, kept by Miſs Mehitable Higginſon, a true gentlewoman, deſcended from the venerable Francis Higginſon, who emigrated to Salem in 1629, when there were only ſeven houſes on the ſpot now covered by the whole city, and who, from his ſcholarſhip, eloquence, and piety, has ſometimes been called the founder of the churches of New England. Miſs Higginſon underſtood, with an inſtinct for which experience affords no ſufficient ſubſtitute, what belongs to childhood, and how beſt to direct and mould its opening faculties. It was her wont to call herſelf, not the ſchool *miſtreſs*, but the ſchool *mother*, of her little flock; and a ſyſtem of diſcipline which might be ſummed up in ſuch a phraſe could hardly fail of being effectual for good. Certainly it ſucceeded to a remarkable degree with her many pupils, during the half-century in which ſhe devoted herſelf with truth and love to her calling. Of her more favored children, William was one.

Maſter Knapp's ſchool.

From the tender and faithful hands of Miſs Higginſon, he paſſed to the ſchool of Mr. Jacob Newman Knapp, long known in Salem as "Maſter Knapp," — a perſon who, as the beſt teacher to be obtained, had been procured by Mr. Preſcott and a few of his more intimate friends, all of whom were anxious, as he was, to ſpare neither pains nor expenſe in the education of their children. Under Mr. Knapp's care William was placed at New-Year, 1803, when he was leſs than ſeven years old; and he continued there until the midſummer of 1808, when his father removed to Boſton.

The recollections of him during theſe four or five years are diſtinct in the minds of his teacher, who ſtill ſurvives (1862) at a venerable old age, and of a few ſchoolmates, now no longer young. He was a bright, merry boy, with an inquiſitive mind, quick perceptions, and a ready, retentive memory. His leſſons were generally well learned; but he loved play better than books, and was too buſy with other thoughts than

CHAP. I. 1803 – 1808. ÆT. 7 – 12.

those that belonged to the school-room to become one of Master Knapp's best pupils. He was, though large for his years, not very vigorous in his person. He never fancied rude or athletic sports, but amused himself with such boys of his own age as preferred games requiring no great physical strength; or else he made himself happy at home with such light reading as is most attractive to all children, and especially to those whose opening tastes and tendencies are quiet, if not intellectual. In the latter part of his life he used to say, that he recollected no period of his childhood when he did not love books; adding, that often, when he was a very little boy, he was so excited by stories appealing strongly to his imagination, that, when his mother left the room, he used to take hold of her gown, and follow her as she moved about the house, rather than be left alone. But in school he did not love work, and made no remarkable progress in his studies.

Early love of reading.

Schoolfellows.

Neither was he so universally liked by the boys with whom he was associated in Salem, as he was afterwards by the boys in other schools. He had indeed his favorites, to whom he was much attached and who were much attached to him, and he never faltered in his kindness to them subsequently, however humble or unfortunate their condition became; but at home he had been encouraged to speak his mind with a boldness that was sometimes rude; partly from parental indulgence, and partly as a means of detecting easily any tendencies in his character that his conscientious father might think it needful to restrain. The consequence was, that a similar habit of very free speaking at school, joined to his great natural vivacity and excessive animal spirits, made him more confident in the expression of his opinions and feelings than was agreeable, and prevented him from becoming a favorite with a portion of his schoolmates. It laid, however, I doubt not, the foundation for that attractive simplicity and openness which constituted prominent traits in his character through life.

Sensitive conscience.

His conscience was sensitive and tender from the first, and

never ceaſed to be ſo. A ſermon to children produced a ſtriking effect upon him when he was ſtill a child. It was a very ſimple, direct one, by Dr. Channing, and William's mother told him to read it to her one evening when his conduct had required ſome ſlight cenſure, and ſhe thought this the beſt way to adminiſter it. He obeyed her reluctantly. But ſoon his lips began to quiver, and his voice to choke. He ſtopped, and with tears ſaid, "Mother, if I am ever a bad boy again, won't you ſet me to reading that ſermon?"

Gay ſpirits.

His temperament was very gay, like his mother's, and his eager and ſometimes turbulent ſpirits led him into faults of conduct oftener, perhaps, than anything elſe. Like moſt ſchool-boys, he was fond of practical jokes, and ventured them, not only in a ſpirit of idle miſchief, but even rudely. Once he badly frightened a ſervant-girl in the family, by ſpringing unexpectedly upon her from behind a door. But his father, buſy and anxious as he was with the intereſts of others, and occupying himſelf leſs with the material concerns and affairs of his houſehold than almoſt any perſon I ever knew, had yet an eye of unceaſing vigilance for whatever related to the training of his children, and did not ſuffer even a fault ſo ſlight to paſs without rebuke. After this, although William was always a boy full of life and miſchief, he gave no more trouble by ſuch rudeneſs at home.

Home influences.

No doubt, therefore, his early education, and the circumſtances moſt nearly connected with it, were, on the whole, favorable to the formation of a character ſuited to the poſition in the world that he was likely to occupy; — a character, I mean, that would not eaſily yield to the temptations of proſperity, nor be eaſily broken down by adverſe fortune, if adverſe fortune ſhould come upon it. It was, in fact, a condition of things that directly tended to develop thoſe manly qualities which in our New-England ſociety have always moſt ſurely contributed to progreſs and ſucceſs.

Nor was there anything in the circle with which his family was moſt connected to counteract theſe influences. Life in

CHAP. I.
1803 – 1808.
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Salem at that period.

those days was a very simple thing in Salem, compared with what it is now. It was the period when Mr. Gray and Mr. Peabody, the Pickmans and the Derbys, were too busy with their widely extended commerce to think often of anything else; when Mr. Justice Putnam was a young lawyer struggling up to eminence; when Mr. Story, afterwards the distinguished jurist and judge, was only beginning to be heard of; and when the mathematical genius of Dr. Bowditch, and the classical studies of Mr. Pickering, which were destined later to have so wide an effect on our community, were hardly known beyond the limits of their personal acquaintance.

Society in Salem.

In those active, earnest days, the modest luxury of hackney-coaches and hired waiters had not come to be deemed needful in Salem, even among those who were already prosperous and rich. When, therefore, Mrs. Prescott had invited friends to dine, — a form of social intercourse which she and her husband always liked, and which they practised more freely than most persons then did, — if the weather proved unfavorable, she sent her own chaise to bring her lady guests to her house, and carried them safely home in the same way when the hospitable evening was ended. Or, if the company were larger than her usual arrangements would permit to be well served, she borrowed the servants of her friends, and lent her own in return. But the days of such unpretending simplicity are gone by, and a tasteful luxury has naturally and gracefully taken its place. They were days, however, on which my friend always looked back with satisfaction, and I doubt not, nor did he doubt, that it was well for him that his character received something of its early direction under their influence. He was always grateful that his first years were passed neither in a luxurious home nor in a luxurious state of society.[3]

Removal to Boston.

Mr. Prescott the elder removed with his family to Boston

[3] For this sketch of society as it existed in Salem at the end of the last century I am indebted to the venerable Mrs. Putnam, widow of Mr. Justice Putnam, whose family, early connected with that of the elder Mr. Prescott by bonds of friendship and affection, has, in the third generation, been yet more intimately and happily united to it by the marriage of the eldest son of the historian with a granddaughter of the jurist.

in the ſummer of 1808, and eſtabliſhed himſelf in a houſe on Tremont Street. But although he had come to a larger town, and one where thoſe of his own condition indulged in ſomewhat more free habits of expenſe, the manner of life that he preferred and followed in his new home was not different from the one to which he had been accuſtomed in Salem. It was a life of cordial, open hoſpitality, but without ſhow or pretenſion of any ſort. And ſo it continued to the laſt.

The promiſing ſon was ſent in the early autumn to the beſt claſſical ſchool then known in New England; for his father, bred at Dummer Academy by "Maſter Moody," who in his time was without an equal among us as a teacher of Latin and Greek, always valued ſuch training more than any other. And it was fortunate for William that he did ſo; for his early claſſical diſcipline was undoubtedly a chief element in his ſubſequent ſucceſs.

Dr. Gardiner's ſchool.

The ſchool to which he was ſent — if ſchool it could properly be called — was one kept with few of the attributes of ſuch an inſtitution, but in its true ſpirit, by the Rev. Dr. Gardiner,[4] Rector of Trinity Church, Boſton. Dr. Gardiner was a good ſcholar, bred in England under Dr. Parr, who, some

[4] Dr. Gardiner had earlier kept a regular ſchool in Boſton, with no ſmall ſucceſs; but, at the time referred to, he received in his own library, with little form, about a dozen youths, — ſome who were to be prepared for college, and ſome who, having been already graduated, ſought, by his aſſiſtance, to increaſe their knowledge of the Greek and Latin claſſics. It was excellent, direct, perſonal teaching; — the more effective becauſe the number of pupils was ſo ſmall. It was, too, of a ſort peculiarly adapted to make an impreſſion on a mind and temperament like young Preſcott's. Indeed, it became the foundation of an attachment between him and his inſtructor, which was ſevered only by death, and of which a touching proof was afforded during the laſt, long-protracted illneſs of Dr. Gardiner, who, as his infirmities increaſed, directed his ſervant to admit nobody, beyond the limits of his family connections, except Mr. Preſcott. It is needleſs to add, that, after this, his old pupil was almoſt daily at his door. Nor did he ever afterwards forget his early, kind teacher. Dr. Gardiner died in 1830, in England, where he had gone with the hope of recovery, and, on receiving the intelligence of his death, Mr. Preſcott publiſhed, in one of our newſpapers, an intereſting obituary of him. Subſequently, too, in 1848, he wrote to Dr. Sprague, in Albany, an affectionate letter (to be found in that gentleman's "Annals of the American Pulpit," Vol. V. p. 365, 1859) on Dr. Gardiner's character, and in the very laſt year of his life he was occupied with freſh intereſt about its publication.

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years afterwards, at Hatton, ſpoke of him to me with much regard and reſpect. But, beſides his ſcholarſhip, Dr. Gardiner was a generous, warm-hearted man, who took a ſincere intereſt in his pupils, and ſympathized with them in their purſuits to a degree which, however deſirable, is very rare. A great deal of his teaching was oral; ſome of it, no doubt, traditional, and brought from his Engliſh ſchool; all of it was excellent. For, although recitations of careful exactneſs were required, and puniſhments not ſlight inflicted for negligence and breaches of diſcipline, ſtill much knowledge was communicated by an eaſy, converſational commentary, the beſt part of which could not readily have been found in books, while the whole of it gave a life and intereſt to the leſſons that could have been given by nothing elſe.

My firſt acquaintance with him.

It was in this ſchool, as ſoon as he became a member of it, that I firſt knew William, as a bright boy a little more than twelve years old. I had then been under Dr. Gardiner's inſtruction ſome months, not as a regular member of any claſs, but at private hours, with one or two others, to obtain a knowledge of the higher Greek and Latin claſſics, not elſewhere to be had among us. Very ſoon the young ſtranger was brought by his rapid advancement to recite with us, and before long we two were left to purſue a part of our ſtudies quite by ourſelves. From this time, of courſe, I knew him well, and, becoming acquainted in his father's family, ſaw him not only daily at ſchool, but often at home. It was a moſt agreeable, cheerful houſe, where the manners were ſo frank and ſincere, that the ſon's poſition in it was eaſily underſtood. He was evidently loved — much loved — of all; his mother ſhowing her fondneſs without an attempt at diſguiſe, — his father not without anxiety concerning his ſon's ſpirits and the peculiar temptations of his age and poſition. Probably he was too much indulged. Certainly, in his fine, open nature there were great inducements to this parental infirmity; and a ſpirit of boyiſh miſchief in his relations with thoſe of his own age, and a certain degree of preſumption in his manners toward

His family in Boſton.

thoſe who were older, were not wanting to juſtify the ſuſpicion. That he was much truſted to himſelf there was no doubt.

But he loved books of the lighter ſort, and was kept by his taſte for them from many irregular indulgences. Books, however, were by no means ſo acceſſible in thoſe days as they are now. Few, comparatively, were publiſhed in the United States, and, as it was the dreary period of the commercial reſtrictions that preceded the war of 1812 with England, ſtill fewer were imported. Even good ſchool-books were not eaſily obtained. A copy of Euripides in the original could not be bought at any bookſeller's ſhop in New England, and was with difficulty borrowed. A German inſtructor, or means for learning the German language, were not to be had either in Boſton or Cambridge. The beſt publications that appeared in Great Britain came to us ſlowly, and were ſeldom reprinted. New books from the Continent hardly reached us at all. Men felt poor and anxious in thoſe dark days, and literary indulgences, which have now become almoſt as neceſſary to us as our daily food, were luxuries enjoyed by few.

Difficulty of getting books.

There was, however, a reſpectable, but very miſcellaneous collection of books juſt beginning to be made by the proprietors of the Boſton Athenæum; an inſtitution imitated chiefly from the Athenæum of Liverpool, and eſtabliſhed in an unpretending building not far from the houſe of the Preſcott family in Tremont Street. Its real founder was Mr. William S. Shaw, who, by a ſort of common conſent, exerciſed over it a control all but unlimited, acting for many years gratuitouſly as its librarian. He was a near connection of the two Preſidents Adams, the firſt of whom he had ſerved as private ſecretary during his adminiſtration of the government; and in conſequence of this relationſhip, when Mr. John Quincy Adams was ſent as Miniſter of the United States to Ruſſia, he depoſited his library, conſiſting of eight or ten thouſand volumes, in the Athenæum, and thus materially increaſed its reſources during his abſence abroad. The young ſons of its proprietors had then, by the rules of the inſtitution, no real right to

Boſton Athenæum.

W. S. Shaw.

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frequent its rooms; but Mr. Shaw, with all his paſſion for books, and his anxiety to keep ſafely and strictly thoſe intruſted to him, was a kind-hearted man, who loved bright boys, and often gave them privileges in his Athenæum to which they had no regular claim. William was one of thoſe who were moſt favored, and who moſt gladly availed themſelves of the opportunity which was thus given them. He reſorted to the Athenæum, and to the part of it containing Mr. Adams's library, as few boys cared to do, and ſpent many of his play-hours there in a ſort of idle reading, which probably did little to nouriſh his mind, but which, as he afterwards loved to acknowledge, had a decided influence in forming his literary tendencies and taſtes.[5]

His idle reading.

Of courſe ſuch reading was not very ſelect. He chiefly fancied extravagant romances and books of wild adventure. How completely he was carried away by the "Amadis de Gaula" in Southey's tranſlation he recorded long afterwards, when he looked back upon his boyiſh admiration, not only with ſurpriſe, but with a natural regret that all ſuch feelings belonged to the remote paſt. The age of chivalry, he ſaid ſadly, was gone by for him.[6]

Does not love ſtudy.

But, whatever may have been his general reading at this early period, he certainly did not, in the years immediately preceding his college life, affect careful ſtudy, or ſerious intellectual cultivation of any kind. His leſſons he learned eaſily, but he made a characteriſtic diſtinction between ſuch as were indiſpenſable for his admiſſion to the Univerſity, and ſuch as were preſcribed merely to increaſe his claſſical knowledge and accompliſhments. He was always careful to learn the firſt well, but equally careful to do no more, or at leaſt not to ſeem willing to do it, leſt yet further claims ſhould be made upon him. I remember well his cheerful and happy recitations of the Œdipus Tyrannus; but he was very fretful at being required to read the more difficult Prometheus Vinctus of

5 Letter of W. H. Gardiner, Eſq. to T. G. Cary, Eſq., MS.

6 North American Review, January, 1850.

Æſchylus, becauſe it was not a part of the courſe of ſtudy which all muſt paſs through. Horace, too, of which we read ſome parts together, intereſted and excited him beyond his years, but Juvenal he diſliked, and Perſius he could not be made to read at all. He was, in ſhort, neither more nor leſs than a thoroughly natural, bright boy, who loved play better than work, but who could work well under sufficient inducements and penalties.

Intimacy with William H. Gardiner.

During the whole of his ſchool days in Boſton, although he was a general favorite among the boys, his friend and *fidus Achates* was a ſon of his teacher, Dr. Gardiner, of just about his own age; and, if not naturally of a more ſtaid and ſober character, kept by a wiſe parental diſcipline under more reſtraint. It was a happy intimacy, and one that was never broken or diſturbed. Their paths in life diverged, indeed, ſomewhat later, and they neceſſarily ſaw each other leſs as they became engroſſed by purſuits ſo different; — the one as a ſevere, retired ſtudent; the other as an active, eminent lawyer, much too buſy with the affairs of others to be ſeen often out of his own office and family. But their attachment always reſted on the old foundation, and the friend of his boyhood became in time Mr. Preſcott's chief confidential adviſer in his worldly affairs, and was left at laſt the ſole executor of his conſiderable eſtate.

Their ſtudies together.

In the firſt few years of their acquaintance they were conſtantly together. Dr. Gardiner gave inſtruction only in Greek, Latin, and Engliſh. The two boys, therefore, took private leſſons, as they were called, of other teachers in arithmetic and in writing; but made ſmall progreſs in either. They played, too, with French, Italian, and Spaniſh, but accompliſhed little; for they cared nothing about theſe ſtudies, which they accounted ſuperfluous, and which they purſued only to pleaſe their friends. They managed, however, always to have the ſame inſtructors, and ſo were hardly ſeparated at all. They learnt, indeed, the ſlight and eaſy leſſons ſet them, but were careful to do no more, and ſo made no real progreſs.

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Their amuſements.

Much of their free time they gave to amuſements not altogether idle, but certainly not tending very directly to intellectual culture. Some of them were ſuch as might have been readily expected from their age. Thus, after frequenting a circus, they imitated what they had ſeen, until their performances were brought to a diſaſtrous concluſion by cruelly ſcorching a favorite family cat that was compelled to play a part in them. At another time they fired piſtols till they diſturbed the quiet neighborhood, and came near killing a horſe in the Preſcott ſtable. This was all natural enough, becauſe it was boyiſh, though it was a little more adventurous, perhaps, than boys' ſports commonly are. Of the ſame ſort, too, was a good deal of miſchief in which they indulged themſelves, with little harm to anybody, in the ſtreets as they went to their ſchool exerciſes, eſpecially in the evening, and then came home again, looking all the graver for their frolics. But two of their amuſements were characteriſtic and peculiar, and were, perhaps, not without influence on the lives of each of them, and eſpecially on the life of the hiſtorian.

Mimic battles.

They deviſed games of battles of all ſorts, ſuch as they had found in their ſchool-books, among the Greeks and Romans, or ſuch as filled the newſpapers of the time during the conteſt between the Engliſh and the French in the Spaniſh Peninſula; carrying them out by an apparatus more than commonly ingenious for boys of their age. At firſt, it was merely bits of paper, arranged ſo as to indicate the different arms and commanders of the different ſquadrons; which were then thrown into heaps, and cut up at random with ſhears as ruthleſs as thoſe of the Fates; quite ſevering many of the imaginary combatants ſo as to leave no hope of life, and curtailing others of their fair proportions in a way to indicate wounds more or leſs dangerous. But this did not laſt long. Soon they came to more perſonal and ſoldier-like encounters; dreſſing themſelves up in portions of old armor which they found among the curioſities of the Athenæum, and which, I fear, they had little right to uſe as they did, albeit their value for any purpoſe

was ſmall indeed. What was peculiar about theſe amuſements was, that there was always an idea of a conteſt in them, — generally of a battle, — whether in the plains of Latium with Æneas, or on Bunker Hill under William's grandfather, or in the fanciful combats of knights-errant in the "Amadis de Gaula"; and *Preſcott* apparently cared more about them on this account than on any other.

Story-telling.

The other eſpecial amuſement of the two friends was that of alternately telling ſtories invented as they went along. It was oftener their ſtreet-talk than anything elſe; and, if the thread of the fiction in hand were broken off, by arriving at ſchool or in any other way, they reſumed it as ſoon as the interruption ceaſed, and ſo continued until the whole was finiſhed; each improviſing a complete ſeries of adventures for the entertainment of the other and of nobody elſe. Preſcott's inventions were generally of the wildeſt; for his imagination was lively, and his head was full of the romances that prevailed in our circulating libraries before Scott's time. But they both enjoyed this exerciſe of their faculties heartily, and each thought the other's ſtories admirable. The hiſtorian always remembered theſe favorite amuſements of his boyiſh days with ſatisfaction; and, only two or three years before his death, when he had one of his grandchildren on his knee, and was gratifying the boy's demand for a fairy tale, he cried out, as Mr. Gardiner entered the room: "Ah, there's the man that could tell you ſtories. You know, William," he continued, addreſſing his friend, "I never had any inventive faculty in my life; all I have done in the way of ſtory-telling, in my later years, has been by diligent hard work." Such, near the cloſe of his life, was his modeſt eſtimate of his own brilliant powers and performances.

How much theſe amuſements may have influenced the character of the narrator of the Conqueſt of Mexico, it is not poſſible to determine. Probably not much. But one thing is certain. They were not amuſements common with boys of his age; and in his ſubſequent career his power of deſcribing

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battles, and his power of relating a ſucceſſion of adventures, are among his moſt remarkable attributes.[7]

Enters Harvard College.

But his boyiſh days were now over. In Auguſt, 1811, he was admitted to the Sophomore Claſs in Harvard College, having paſſed his examination with credit. The next day he wrote to his father, then attending the Supreme Court at Portland, in Maine, the following letter, characteriſtic of the eaſy relations which ſubſiſted between them, but which, eaſy as they were, did not prevent the ſon, through his whole life, from looking on his admirable father with a ſincere veneration.

TO THE HON. WILLIAM PRESCOTT.

Boſton, Aug. 23, [1811].

Letter to his father.

DEAR FATHER,

I now write you a few lines to inform you of my fate. Yeſterday at eight o'clock I was ordered to the Preſident's, and there, together with a Carolinian, Middleton,[8] was examined for Sophomore. When we were firſt uſhered into their preſence, they looked like ſo many judges of the Inquiſition. We were ordered down into the parlor, almoſt frightened out of our wits, to be examined by each ſeparately; but we ſoon found them quite a pleaſant ſort of chaps. The Preſident ſent us down a good diſh of pears, and treated us very much like gentlemen.[9] It was not ended in the morning; but we returned in the afternoon, when Profeſſor Ware examined us in *Grotius de Veritate*.[10] We found him very good-natured, for I happened to aſk him a queſtion in theology, which made him laugh ſo that he was obliged to cover his face with his hands. At half paſt

[7] For the facts in this account of the ſchool-boy days of Mr. Preſcott, I am partly indebted, as I am for much elſe in this memoir, — eſpecially what relates to his college career, — to Mr. William Howard Gardiner, the early friend referred to in the text.

[8] This was, of courſe, his firſt knowledge of Mr. Arthur Middleton, with whom, as a claſſmate, he was afterwards much connected, and who, when he was Secretary of Legation and *Chargé d'Affaires* of the United States at Madrid, rendered his early friend important literary ſervices, as we ſhall ſee when we reach that period of Mr. Preſcott's life. Mr. Middleton died in 1853.

[9] Preſident Kirkland, who had only a few months earlier become the head of the Univerſity, will always be remembered by thoſe who knew him, not only for the richneſs and originality of his mind and for his great perſpicacity, but for the kindlineſs of his nature. The days, however, in which a diſh of pears followed an examination, were, I think, very few even in his time, — connected with no traditions of the paſt, and not ſuited to the ſtate of diſcipline ſince. It was, I ſuſpect, only a compliment to William's family, who had been pariſhioners of Dr. Kirkland, when he was a clergyman in Boſton.

[10] Dr. Henry Ware was Hollis Profeſſor of Divinity.

three our fate was decided, and we were declared 'Sophomores of Harvard University.'

As you would like to know how I appeared, I will give you the converſation, *verbatim*, with Mr. Friſbie, when I went to ſee him after the examination. I aſked him, 'Did I appear well in my examination?' Anſwer. 'Yes.' Queſtion. 'Did I appear *very* well, Sir?' Anſwer. 'Why are you ſo particular, young man? Yes, you did yourſelf a great deal of credit.' [11]

I feel to-day twenty pounds lighter than I did yeſterday. I ſhall dine at Mr. Gardiner's. Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner both ſay that on me depends William's going to college or not. If I behave well, he will go; if not, that he certainly ſhall not go. Mr. W. P. Maſon has aſked me to dine with him on Commencement Day, as he gives a dinner. I believe I ſhall go. As I had but little time, I thought it beſt to tell a long ſtory, and write it badly, rather than a ſhort one written well. I have been to ſee Mr. H—— this morning; — no news. Remember me to your fellow-travellers, C., & M., &c., &c. Love to mother, whoſe affectionate ſon I remain,

WM. HICKLING PRESCOTT.

[11] Before this examination, William had, for a ſhort time, been under the private and eſpecial inſtruction of Mr. Friſbie, who was then a Tutor in Harvard College, and ſubſequently one of its favorite Profeſſors, — too early taken away by death, in 1822.

CHAPTER II.

1811–1815.

College Life. — Good Resolutions. — Injury to Sight. — Immediate Effects. — State of the Eye. — Relations with the Person who inflicted the Injury. — Studies subsequent to the Injury. — Mathematics. — Latin and Greek. — Phi Beta Kappa Society. — Graduated. — Studies. — Severe Inflammation of the Eye. — Character under Trial. — Anxiety about his Health. — Is to visit Europe.

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AT the time William thus gayly entered on his collegiate career, he had, thanks to the excellent training he had received from Dr. Gardiner, a good taste formed and forming in English literature, and he probably knew more of Latin and Greek — not of Latin and Greek literature, but of the languages of Greece and Rome — than most of those who entered college with him knew when they were graduated. But, on the other hand, he had no liking for mathematics, and never acquired any; nor did he ever fancy metaphysical discussions and speculations. His position in his class was, of course, determined by these circumstances, and he was willing that it should be. But he did not like absolutely to fail of a respectable rank. It would not have been becoming the character of a cultivated gentleman, to which at that time he more earnestly aspired than to any other; nor would it have satisfied the just expectations of his family,

His tastes and studies.

which always had much influence with him. It was difficult for him, however, to make the efforts and the ſacrifices indiſpenſable to give him the poſition of a real ſcholar. He adopted, indeed, rules for the hours, and even the minutes, that he would devote to each particular ſtudy; but he was ſo careful never to exceed them, that it was plain his heart was not in the matter, and that he could not reaſonably hope to ſucceed by ſuch enforced and mechanical arrangements. Still, he had already a ſtrong will concealed under a gay and light-hearted exterior. This ſaved him from many dangers. He was always able to ſtop ſhort of what he deemed flagrant exceſſes, and to keep within the limits, though rather looſe ones, which he had preſcribed to himſelf. His ſtandard for the character of a gentleman varied, no doubt, at this period, and ſometimes was not ſo high on the ſcore of morals as it ſhould have been; but he always acted up to it, and never paſſed the world's line of honor, or expoſed himſelf to academical cenſures by paſſing the leſs flexible line drawn by college rules. He was, however, willing to run very near to both of them.

Rules for work.

Standard for character.

Among the modes he adopted at this time to regulate his conduct, was one which had much more influence with him later, than it had at firſt. It was that of making good reſolutions; — a practice in which he perſevered through life to an extraordinary extent, not always heeding whether he kept them with great exactneſs, but ſure to repeat them as often as they were broken, until, at laſt, ſome of them took effect, and his ultimate purpoſe was, in part at leaſt, accompliſhed. He pardoned himſelf, I ſuppoſe, too eaſily for his manifold neglects and breaches of the compacts he had thus made with his conſcience; but there was repentance at the bottom of all, and his character was ſtrengthened by the practice. The early part of his college career, however, when for the firſt time he left the too gentle reſtraints of his father's houſe, was leſs affected by this ſyſtem of ſelf-control, and was the moſt dangerous period of his life. Upon portions of it he afterwards looked back with regret.

Irregularities.

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Habit of making resolutions.

"It was about this time," — says Mr. Gardiner, in a very interesting paper concerning his acquaintance with Mr. Prescott, which he has been good enough to place at my disposition, — "it was about this time, that is, pretty early in his college life, when the first excitements of perfect liberty of action were a little abated, that he began to form good resolutions, — to form them, not to keep them. This was, so far as I remember, the feeble beginning of a process of frequent self-examination and moral self-control, which he afterwards cultivated and practised to a degree beyond all example that has come under my observation in cases of like constitutional tendency. It was, I conceive, the truly great point of his moral character, and the chief foundation of all he accomplished in after life as a literary man; a point which lay always concealed to transient observers under lightness and gayety of manner.

"This habit of forming distinct resolutions about all sorts of things, sometimes important, but often in themselves the merest trifles in the world, grew up rapidly to an extent that became rather ludicrous; especially as it was accompanied by another habit, that of thinking aloud, and concealing nothing about himself, which led him to announce to the first friend he met his latest new resolution. The practice, I apprehend, must have reached its acme about the time when he informed me one day that he had just made a new resolution, which was, — since he found he could not keep those which he had made before, — that he would never make another resolution as long as he lived. It is needless to say that this was kept but a very short time.

"These resolutions, during college days, related often to the number of hours, nay, the number of minutes, per day to be appropriated to each particular exercise or study; the number of recitations and public prayers per week that he would not fail to attend; the number of times per week that he would not exceed in attending balls, theatrical entertainments in Boston, &c., &c. What was most observable in this sort of accounts that he used to keep with himself was, that the errors were all on one side. Casual temptations easily led him, at this time of life, to break through the severer restrictions of his rule, but it was matter of high conscience with him never to curtail the full quantity of indulgences which it allowed. He would be very sure not to run one minute *over*, however he might sometimes fall *short* of the full time for learning a particular lesson, which he used to con over with his watch before him, lest by any inadvertence he might cheat himself into too much study.

Indulgences.

"On the same principle, he was careful never to attend any *greater* number of college exercises, nor any *less* number of evening diversions in Boston, than he had bargained for with himself. Then, as he found out by experience the particular circumstances which served as good excuses for infractions of his rule, he would begin to complicate his accounts with himself by introducing sets of fixed exceptions, fringing on amendment, as it were, after amendment to the general law, until it became extremely difficult for himself to tell what his rule actually was in its application to the new cases which arose; and, at last, he would take the whole subject, so to speak, into a new draft, embodying it in a bran-new resolution. And what is particularly curious is, that all the casuistry attending this process was sure to be published, as it went along, to all his intimates.

Frankness.

"The manner in which he uſed to compound with his conſcience in ſuch matters is well illuſtrated by an anecdote, which properly belongs to a little later period, but which may well enough be inſerted here. It is one which I was lately put in mind of by Mr. J. C. Gray, but which I had heard that gentleman tell long ago in Preſcott's preſence, who readily admitted it to be ſubſtantially true. The incident referred to occurred at the time he and Mr. Gray were travelling together in Europe. An oculiſt, or phyſician, whom he had conſulted at Paris, had adviſed him, among other things, to live leſs freely, and when puſhed by his patient, as was his wont, to fix a very preciſe limit to the quantity of wine he might take, his adviſer told him that he ought never to exceed two glaſſes a day. This rule he forthwith announced his reſolution to adhere to ſcrupulouſly. And he did. But his manner of obſerving it was peculiar. At every new houſe of entertainment they reached in their travels, one of the firſt things Preſcott did was to require the waiter to ſhow him ſpecimens of all the wine-glaſſes the houſe afforded. He would then pick out from among them the largeſt; and this, though it might contain two or three times the quantity of a common wine-glaſs, he would have ſet by his plate as his meaſure at dinner to obſerve the rule in."

Compromiſes with his conſcience.

Accident to his eye.

But juſt at the period of his college hiſtory to which Mr. Gardiner chiefly refers, or a very little later, the painful accident befell him which, in its conſequences, changed the whole aſpect of the world to him, and tended, more than any ſingle event in his life, to make him what he at laſt became. I refer, of courſe, to the accident which ſo fatally impaired his ſight. It occurred in the Commons Hall, one day after dinner, in his Junior year. On this occaſion there was ſome rude frolicking among the undergraduates, ſuch as was not very rare when the college officers had left the tables, as they frequently did, a few minutes before the room was emptied. It was not, however, on this particular occaſion a conſiderable diſorder, and Preſcott had no ſhare in what there was. But when he was paſſing out of the door of the Hall, his attention was attracted by the diſturbance going on behind him. He turned his head quickly to ſee what it was, and at the ſame inſtant received a blow from a large, hard piece of bread, thrown undoubtedly at random, and in mere thoughtleſſneſs and gayety. It ſtruck the *open* eye; — a rare occurrence in the caſe of that vigilant organ, which, on the approach of the ſlighteſt danger, is almoſt always protected by an inſtant and inſtinctive cloſing of the

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lids. But here there was no notice, — no warning. The miſſile, which muſt have been thrown with great force, ſtruck the very diſk of the eye itſelf. It was the left eye. He fell, — and was immediately brought to his father's houſe in town, where, in the courſe of two or three hours from the occurrence of the accident, he was in the hands of Dr. James Jackſon, the kind friend, as well as the wiſe medical adviſer, of his father's family.[1]

Effects of the accident.

The firſt effects of the blow were remarkable. They were, in fact, ſuch as commonly attend a concuſſion of the brain. The ſtrength of the patient was inſtantly and completely proſtrated. Sickneſs at the ſtomach followed. His pulſe was feeble. His face became pale and ſhrunken, and the whole tone of his ſyſtem was reduced ſo low, that he could not ſit up in bed. But his mind was calm and clear, and he was able to give a diſtinct account of the accident that had befallen him, and of what had preceded and followed it.

Medical treatment.

Under ſuch circumſtances no active treatment was deemed adviſable. Quiet was ſtrictly preſcribed. Whatever could tend to the leaſt excitement, phyſical or intellectual, was forbidden. And then nature was left to herſelf. This, no doubt, was the wiſeſt courſe. At any rate, the ſyſtem, which had at firſt yielded ſo alarmingly to the ſhock, gradually recovered its tone, and in a few weeks he returned to Cambridge, and purſued his ſtudies as if nothing very ſerious had happened; — a little more cautiouſly, perhaps, in ſome reſpects, but probably with no diminution of ſuch very moderate diligence as he had previouſly practiſed.[2] But the eye that had been ſtruck was gone. No

One eye gone.

[1] There is a graceful tribute to Dr. Jackſon in Preſcott's Memoir of Mr. John Pickering, where, noticing the intimacy of theſe two diſtinguiſhed men, he ſays, that in London Mr. Pickering was much with Dr. Jackſon, who was then "acquiring the rudiments of the profeſſion which he was to purſue through a long ſeries of years with ſo much honor to himſelf and ſuch widely extended benefit to the community." Collections of the Maſſachuſetts Hiſtorical Society, Third Series, Vol. X. p. 208.

[2] This account of the original injury to Mr. Preſcott's eye, and the notices of his ſubſequent illneſſes and death, in this Memoir, are abridged from an intereſting and important medical letter, which Dr. Jackſon was good enough to addreſs to me in June, 1859, and which may be found entire in a little volume entitled, "Another Letter to a Young Phyſician," (Boſton, 1861,) pp. 130–156.

external mark, either then or afterwards, indicated the injury that had been inflicted; and, although a glimmering light was ſtill perceptible through the ruined organ, there was none that could be made uſeful for any of the practical purpoſes of life. On a careful examination, ſuch as I once made, with magnifying lenſes, at his requeſt, under the direction of a diſtinguiſhed oculiſt, a difference could indeed be detected between the injured eye and the other, and ſometimes, as I ſat with him, I have thought that it ſeemed more dim; but to common obſervation, in ſociety or in the ſtreets, as in the well-known caſe of the author of the "Paradiſe Loſt," no change was perceptible. It was, in fact, a caſe of obſcure, deep paralyſis of the retina, and as ſuch was beyond the reach of the healing art from the moment the blow was given.

One circumſtance, however, in relation to the calamity that thus fell on him in the freſhneſs of his youth, ſhould not be overlooked, becauſe it ſhows, even at this early period, the development of ſtrong traits in his character, ſuch as marked his ſubſequent life. I refer to the fact that he rarely mentioned the name of the young man who had thus inflicted on him an irreparable injury, and that he never mentioned it in a way which could have given pain either to him or to thoſe neareſt to him. Indeed, he ſo often ſpoke to me of the whole affair as a mere chance-medley, for which nobody could be to blame, and of which little could be diſtinctly known, that, for a time, I ſuppoſed he was really ignorant, and preferred to remain ignorant, from whoſe hand the fatal blow had come. But it was not ſo. He always knew who it was; and, years afterwards, when the burden of the injury he had received was much heavier on his thoughts than it had been at firſt, and when an opportunity occurred to do an important kindneſs to the unhappy perſon who had inflicted it, he did it promptly and cordially. *It was a Chriſtian act,* — the more truly Chriſtian, becauſe, although the blow was certainly given by accident, he who inflicted it never expreſſed any ſympathy with the terrible ſuffering he had occaſioned. At leaſt, the ſufferer, to whom, if

Relations with the perſon who inflicted the accidental blow.

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to anybody, he ſhould have expreſſed it, never knew that he regretted what he had done.

Returns to his ſtudies.

When William returned to College and reſumed his ſtudies he had, no doubt, ſomewhat different views and purpoſes in life from thoſe which had moſt influenced him before his accident. The quiet and ſuffering of his dark room had done their work, at leaſt in part. He was, compared with what he had been, a ſobered man. Not that his ſpirits were ſeriouſly affected by it. They ſurvived even this. But inducements and leiſure for reflection had been afforded him ſuch as he had never known before, and, whether the thoughts that followed his accident were the cauſe or not, he now determined to acquire a more reſpectable rank in his claſs as a ſcholar, than he had earlier deemed worth the trouble.

Deſire to diſtinguiſh himſelf.

It was ſomewhat late to do it; but, having no little courage and very conſiderable knowledge in elegant literature, he in part ſucceeded. His remarkable memory enabled him to get on well with the Engliſh ſtudies; even with thoſe for which, as for the higher metaphyſics, he had a hearty diſreliſh. But mathematics and geometry ſeemed to conſtitute an inſurmountable obſtacle. He had taken none of the preparatory ſteps to qualify himſelf for them, and it was impoſſible now to go back to the elements, and lay a ſufficient foundation. He knew, in fact, nothing about them, and never did afterwards. He became deſperate, therefore, and took to deſperate remedies.

Diſlike of mathematics.

The firſt was to commit to memory, with perfect exactneſs, the whole mathematical demonſtration required of his claſs on any given day, ſo as to be able to recite every ſyllable and letter of it as they ſtood in the book, without comprehending the demonſtration at all, or attaching any meaning to the words and ſigns of which it was compoſed. It was, no doubt, a feat of memory of which few men would have been capable, but it was alſo one whoſe worthleſſneſs a careful teacher would very ſoon detect, and one, in itſelf, ſo intolerably onerous, that no pupil could long practiſe it. Beſides, it was a trick, and a fraud of any kind, except to cheat himſelf, was contrary to his very nature.

Frank mode of getting rid of their ſtudy.

After trying it, therefore, a few times, and enjoying whatever amuſement it could afford him and his friends, who were in the ſecret, he took another method more characteriſtic. He went to his Profeſſor, and told him the truth; not only his ignorance of geometry, and his belief that he was incapable of underſtanding a word of it, but the mode by which he had ſeemed to comply with the requiſitions of the recitation-room, while in fact he evaded them; adding, at the ſame time, that, as a proof of mere induſtry, he was willing to perſevere in committing the leſſons to memory, and reciting by rote what he did not and could not underſtand, if ſuch recitations were required of him, but that he would rather be permitted to uſe his time more profitably. The Profeſſor, ſtruck with the honeſty and ſincerity of his pupil, as well as with the ſingularity of the caſe, and ſeeing no likelihood that a ſimilar one would occur, merely exacted his attendance at the regular hours, from which, in fact, he had no power to excuſe him; but gave him to underſtand that he ſhould not be troubled further with the duty of reciting. The ſolemn farce, therefore, of going to the exerciſe, book in hand, for ſeveral months, without looking at the leſſon, was continued, and Preſcott was always grateful to the kindly Profeſſor for his forbearance.

Other troubles.

On another occaſion, he was in danger of more ſerious trouble with one of the Profeſſors. In this caſe it aroſe from the circumſtance that, at all periods of his life, Preſcott was now and then affected with a nervous laugh, or fit of laughter, which, as it was always without adequate cauſe, ſometimes broke out moſt inopportunely. In a very intereſting sketch of ſome paſſages in his life, by his friend Gardiner, which I have received ſince this Memoir was prepared, there is an account of two ſuch outbreaks, both of which I will give here, becauſe they are connected, and belong to nearly the ſame period in his life, and becauſe the laſt is ſtrictly to be placed among his college adventures. Speaking of this involuntary merriment, Mr. Gardiner ſays: —

"How mirthful he was, — how fond of a merry laugh, — how overflowing

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Involuntary laughter.

with means to excite one on all admiſſible occaſions, — I have already mentioned. But what I now ſpeak of was ſomething beyond this. He had a ſenſe of the ludicrous ſo ſtrong, that it ſeemed at times quite to overpower him. He would laugh on ſuch occaſions, — not vociferouſly indeed, but moſt inordinately, and for a long time together, as if poſſeſſed by the ſpirit of Momus himſelf. It ſeemed to be ſomething perfectly uncontrollable, provoked often by the ſlighteſt apparent cauſe ; and ſometimes, in his younger days, under circumſtances that made its indulgence a poſitive impropriety. This ſeemed only to aggravate the diſeaſe. I call it a diſeaſe ; for it deprived him at the time of all ſelf-control, and in one of the other ſex would have been perhaps hyſterical. But there was ſomething irreſiſtibly comic in it to the by-ſtanders, accompanied, as it uſed to be, by imperfect efforts, through drolleries uttered in broken, half-intelligible ſentences, to communicate the ludicrous idea. This original ludicrous idea he ſeldom ſucceeded in communicating ; but the infection of laughter would ſpread, by a ſort of animal magnetiſm, from one to another, till I have ſeen a whole company perfectly convulſed with it, no one of whom could have told what in the world he was laughing at, unleſs it were at the ſight of Preſcott, ſo utterly overcome, and ſtruggling in vain to expreſs himſelf.

Breaks up ſome private theatricals.

"To give a better idea of this, I may cite an inſtance that I witneſſed in his younger days, either ſhortly before, or just after, his firſt European tour. A party of young gentlemen and ladies — he and I among them — undertook to entertain themſelves and their friends with ſome private theatricals. After having performed one or two light pieces with ſome ſucceſs, we attempted the more ambitious taſk of getting up Julius Cæſar. It proceeded only to two partial rehearſals ; but the manner in which they ended is to the preſent point. When all had ſufficiently ſtudied their parts, we met for a final rehearſal. The part of Mark Antony had been allotted to Preſcott. He got through with it extremely well till he came to the ſpeech in the third act which begins, 'O pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth!' This was addreſſed to one of our company, extended on the floor, and enacting the part of Cæſar's murdered corpſe, with becoming ſtillneſs and rigidity. At this point of the performance the ludicrous ſeized upon Preſcott to ſuch a degree, that he burſt out into one of his grand fits of laughing, and laughed ſo immoderately and ſo infectiouſly, that the whole company, corpſe and all, followed ſuit, and a ſcene of tumult enſued which put a ſtop to further rehearſal. Another evening we attempted it again, after a ſolemn aſſurance from Preſcott that he ſhould certainly command himſelf, and not give way to ſuch a folly again. But he did, — in preciſely the ſame place, and with the ſame reſult. After that we gave up Julius Cæſar.

Diſturbs a college exerciſe.

"A more curious inſtance occurred while he was in college. I was not preſent at this, but have heard him tell it repeatedly in after life. On ſome occaſion it happened that he went to the ſtudy of the Rhetorical Profeſſor, for the purpoſe of receiving a private leſſon in elocution. The Profeſſor and his pupil were entirely alone. Preſcott took his attitude as orator, and began to declaim the ſpeech he had committed for the purpoſe ; but, after proceeding through a ſentence or two, ſomething ludicrous ſuddenly came acroſs him, and

it was all over with him at once,—just as when he came to the 'bleeding piece of earth,' in the scene above narrated. He was seized with just such an uncontrollable fit of laughter. The Professor—no laughing man—looked grave, and tried to check him; but the more he tried to do so, the more Prescott was convulsed. The Professor began to think his pupil intended to insult him. His dark features grew darker, and he began to speak in a tone of severe reprimand. This only seemed to aggravate Prescott's paroxysm, while he endeavored, in vain, to beg pardon; for he could not utter an intelligible word. At last, the sense of the extreme ludicrousness of the situation, and the perception of Prescott's utter helplessness, seized hold of the Professor himself. He had caught the infection. His features suddenly relaxed, and he too began to laugh; and presently the two, Professor and pupil, the more they looked at each other the more they laughed, both absolutely holding on to their sides, and the tears rolling down their cheeks. Of course, there was an end of all reprimand, and equally an end of all declamation. The Professor, as became him, recovered himself first, but only enough to say: 'Well, Prescott, you may go. This will do for to-day.'"

Success in classical studies.

Mathematics, by the indulgence of his teacher, being disposed of in the manner I have mentioned, and several other of the severer studies being made little more than exercises of memory, he was obliged to depend, for the distinction he desired to obtain at college, and which his family demanded from him, almost entirely on his progress in Latin and Greek, and on his proficiency in English literature. These, however, together with his zeal in pursuing them, were, by the kindness of those in academical authority, admitted to be sufficient. He received, in the latter part of his college career, some of the customary honors of successful scholarship, and at its close a Latin poem was assigned to him as his exercise for Commencement.

Phi Beta Kappa Society.

No honor, however, that he received at college was valued so much by him, or had been so much an object of his ambition, as his admission to the Society of the Phi Beta Kappa, which was composed, in its theory and pretensions and generally in its practice, of a moderate number of the best scholars in the two upper classes. As the selection was made by the undergraduates themselves, and as a single black-ball excluded the candidate, it was a real distinction, and Prescott always liked to stand well with his fellows, later in life no less than

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in youth. From his own experience, therefore, he regarded this old and peculiar society with great favor, and desired at all periods to maintain its privileges and influence in the University.[3]

Latin Poem.

The honor that he received on his graduation was felt to be appropriate to his tastes, and was not a little valued by him and by his father, as a proof of diligence in his classical studies. It is a pity that the poem cannot be found; but it seems to be irrecoverably lost. Only a few months before his death, his college classmate, Mr. S. D. Bradford, sent him one of a few copies, which he had privately printed for his children and friends, of his own scattered miscellanies, among which was a college exercise in Latin prose. Prescott then said, alluding to his own Latin poem: "I wish I had taken as good care of it as you have of your exercises. I have hunted for it in every quarter where I supposed I could have mislaid it, but in vain. If I should find it," he adds, with his accustomed kindliness, "I shall feel content if the Latin will pass muster as well as in your performance."

It was a pleasant little poem, on Hope, "Ad Spem," and, if I remember rightly, it was in hexameters and pentameters. It was delivered in a hot, clear day of August, 1814, in the old meeting-house at Cambridge, to a crowded audience of the most distinguished people of Boston and the neighborhood, attracted in no small degree by an entertainment which Mr. and Mrs. Prescott were to give the same afternoon in honor of their son's success, — one of the very last of the many large entertainments formerly given at Cambridge on such occasions,

[3] The Φ B K, it should be remembered, was, at that period, a society of much more dignity and consequence than it is now. It had an annual public exhibition, largely attended by such graduates as were its members, and, indeed, by the more cultivated portion of the community generally. The undergraduates were in this way associated at once with the prominent and distinguished among their predecessors, who were themselves pleased thus to recall the rank, both as scholars and as gentlemen, which they had early gained, and which they still valued. Membership in such an association was precisely the sort of honor which a young man like Prescott would covet, and he always regretted that its influence among the undergraduates had not been sustained.

and which, in their day, rendered Commencement a more brilliant feſtival than it is now. I was there to hear my friend. I could ſee, by his tremulous motions, that he was a good deal frightened when ſpeaking before ſo large an aſſembly; but ſtill his appearance was manly, and his verſes were thought well of by thoſe who had a right to judge of their merit. I have no doubt they would do credit to his Latinity if they could now be found, for at ſchool he wrote ſuch verſes better than any boy there.

Entertainment when graduated.

After the literary exerciſes of the day came, of courſe, the entertainment to the friends of the family. This was given as a reward to the cheriſhed ſon, which he valued not a little, and the promiſe of which had much ſtimulated his efforts in the latter part of his college life. It was, in fact, a ſomewhat ſumptuous dinner, under a marquee, at which above five hundred perſons of both ſexes ſat down, and which was thoroughly enjoyed by all who took an intereſt in the occaſion. His mother did not heſitate to expreſs the pleaſure her ſon's ſucceſs had given her, and if his father, from the inſtincts of his nature, was more reſerved, he was undoubtedly no leſs ſatisfied. William was very gay, as he always was in ſociety, and perfectly natural; dancing and frolicking on the green with great ſpirit after the more formal part of the feſtivities was over. He was not ſorry that his college life was ended, and ſaid ſo; but he parted from a few of his friends with ſincere pain, as they left Cambridge to go their ſeveral ways in the world, never to meet again as free and careleſs as they then were. Indeed, on ſuch occaſions, notwithſtanding the vivacity of his nature, he was forced to yield a little to his feelings, as I have myſelf ſometimes witneſſed.[4]

[4] There are ſome remarks of Mr. Preſcott on college life in his Memoir of Mr. Pickering, written in 1848, not without a recollection of his own early experiences, which may well be added here. "The four years of college life form, perhaps, the moſt critical epoch in the exiſtence of the individual. This is eſpecially the caſe in our country, where they occur at the tranſition period, — when the boy ripens into the man. The Univerſity, that little world of itſelf, ſhut out by a great barrier, as it were, from the paſt equally with the future, bounding the viſible hori-

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Study of the law propoſed.

Claſſical ſtudies continued.

Immediately after leaving college, he entered as a ſtudent in his father's office; for the law was, in ſome ſort, his natural inheritance, and — with his own talents already ſufficiently developed to be recognized, and with the countenance and aid of a lawyer as eminent as his father was — the path to ſucceſs at the bar ſeemed both tempting and ſure. But his taſtes were ſtill for the purſuits which he had always moſt loved. He entertained, indeed, no doubt what would be his ultimate career in life; but ſtill he lingered fondly over his Greek and Latin books, and was encouraged in an indulgence of his preference by his family and friends, who rightly regarded ſuch ſtudies as the ſafeſt means and foundations for forenſic eminence. He talked with me about them occaſionally, and I rejoiced to hear his accounts of himſelf; for, although I had then been myſelf admitted to the bar, my taſtes were the ſame, and it was pleaſant for me to have his ſympathy, as he always had mine.

All ſtudies interrupted by trouble in his eye.

Four or five months were paſſed in this way, and then another dark and threatening cloud came over his happy life. In January, 1815, he called one day on his medical adviſer, Dr. Jackſon, and conſulted him for an inconſiderable inflammation of his right eye. It was his ſole dependence for ſight, and therefore, although it had ſerved him tolerably well for

zon of the ſtudent like the walls of a monaſtery, ſtill leaves within them ſcope enough for all the ſympathies and the paſſions of manhood. Taken from the ſearching eye of parental ſuperviſion, the youthful ſcholar finds the ſhackles of early diſcipline fall from him, as he is left to the diſpoſal, in a great degree, of his own hours and the choice of his own aſſociates. His powers are quickened by colliſion with various minds, and by the bolder range of ſtudies now open to him. He finds the ſame incentives to ambition as in the wider world, and contends with the ſame zeal for honors which, to his eye, ſeem quite as real — and are they not ſo? — as thoſe in later life. He meets, too, with the ſame obſtacles to ſucceſs as in the world, the ſame temptations to idleneſs, the ſame gilded ſeductions, but without the ſame power of reſiſtance. For in this morning of life his paſſions are ſtrongeſt; his animal nature is more ſenſible to enjoyment; his reaſoning faculties leſs vigorous and mature. Happy the youth who, in this ſtage of his exiſtence, is ſo ſtrong in his principles that he can paſs through the ordeal without faltering or failing; — on whom the contact of bad companionſhip has left no ſtain for future tears to waſh away." Collections of the Maſſachuſetts Hiſtorical Society, Third Series, Vol. X., (1849,) pp. 206, 207.

above a year and a half ſince the accident to the other, the ſlighteſt affection of its powers inevitably excited anxiety. The inflammation was then wholly on the ſurface of the organ, but yet he complained of a degree of difficulty and pain in moving it, greater than is commonly noticed in a caſe of ſo little gravity as this otherwiſe ſeemed to be. Leeches, therefore, were ordered for the temple, and a ſaturnine lotion,—ſimple remedies, no doubt, but ſuch as were ſufficient for the apparent affection, and quite as active in their nature as was deemed judicious.

Its formidable character.

But in the courſe of the night the pain was greatly increaſed, and on the following morning the inflammation, which at firſt had been trifling, was found to be exceſſive,—greater, indeed, than his phyſician, down to the preſent day, after a very wide practice of above ſixty years, has, as he informs me, ever again witneſſed. The eye itſelf was much ſwollen, the cornea had become opaque, and the power of viſion was completely loſt. At the ſame time the patient's ſkin was found to be very hot, and his pulſe hard and accelerated. The whole ſyſtem, in ſhort, was much diſturbed, and the caſe had evidently become one of unuſual ſeverity.

To his calm and wiſe father, therefore,—to his phyſician, who was not leſs his friend than his profeſſional adviſer,—and to himſelf, for he too was conſulted,—it ſeemed that every riſk, except that of life, ſhould be run, to ſave him from the permanent and total blindneſs with which he was obviouſly threatened. Copious bleedings and other depletions were conſequently at once reſorted to, and ſeemed, for a few hours, to have made an impreſſion on the diſeaſe; but the ſuffering returned again with great ſeverity during the ſubſequent night, and the inflammation raged with ſuch abſolute fury for five days, as to reſiſt every form of active treatment that could be deviſed by his anxious phyſician, and by Dr. J. C. Warren, who had been ſummoned in conſultation. The gloomieſt apprehenſions, therefore, were neceſſarily entertained; and even when, on the ſixth day, the inflammation began to yield, and, on the morning of the ſeventh, had almoſt wholly ſubſided,

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little encouragement for a happy result could be felt; for the retina was found to be affected, and the powers of vision were obviously and seriously impaired.

Discovered to be rheumatism.

But in the afternoon of the seventh day the case assumed a new phasis, and the father, much alarmed, hastened in person to Dr. Jackson, telling him that one of the patient's knees had become painful, and that the pain, accompanied with redness and swelling, was increasing fast. To his surprise, Dr. Jackson answered very emphatically that he was most happy to hear it. The mystery which had hung over the disease, from the first intimation of a peculiar difficulty in moving the organ, was now dispelled. It was a case of acute rheumatism. This had not been foreseen. In fact, an instance in which the acute form of that disease — not the chronic — had seized on the eye was unknown to the books of the profession. Both of his medical attendants, it is true, thought they had, in their previous practice, noticed some evidence of such an affection; and therefore, when the assault was made on the knee in the present case, they had no longer any doubt concerning the matter. As the event proved, they had no sufficient reason for any. In truth, the rheumatism, which had attacked their patient in this mysterious but fierce manner, was the disease which, in its direct and indirect forms, persecuted him during the whole of his life afterwards, and caused him most of the sufferings and privations that he underwent in so many different ways, but, above all, in the impaired vision of his remaining eye. Bad, however, as was this condition of things, it was yet a relief to his anxious advisers to be assured of its real character; — not, indeed, because they regarded acute rheumatism in the eye as a slight disease, but because they thought it less formidable in its nature, and less likely at last to destroy the structure of the organ, than a common inflammation so severe and so unmanageable as this must, in the supposed case, have been.

Always suffered from rheumatism afterwards.

The disease now exhibited the usual appearances of acute rheumatism; affecting chiefly the large joints of the lower

extremities, but occaſionally ſhowing itſelf in the neck, and in other parts of the perſon. Twice, in the courſe of the next three months after the firſt attack, it recurred in the eye, accompanied each time with total blindneſs; but, whenever it left the eye, it reſorted again to the limbs, and ſo ſevere was it, even when leaſt violent, that, until the beginning of May, a period of ſixteen weeks, the patient was unable to walk a ſtep.

His good ſpirits.

But nothing was able permanently to affect the natural flow of his ſpirits, — neither pain, nor the ſharp ſurgical remedies to which he was repeatedly ſubjected, nor the diſheartening darkneſs in which he was kept, nor the gloomy viſta that the future ſeemed to open before him. His equanimity and cheerfulneſs were invincible.

During nearly the whole of this trying period I did not ſee him; for I was abſent on a journey to Virginia from the beginning of December to the end of March. But when I did ſee him, — if ſeeing it could be called, in a room from which the light was almoſt entirely excluded, — I found him quite unchanged, either in the tones of his voice or the animation of his manner. He was perfectly natural and very gay; talking unwillingly of his own troubles, but curious and intereſted concerning an abſence of ſeveral years in Europe which at that time I was about to commence. I found him, in fact, juſt as his mother afterwards deſcribed him to Dr. Frothingham, when ſhe ſaid: "I never, in a ſingle inſtance, groped my way acroſs the apartment, to take my place at his ſide, that he did not ſalute me with ſome expreſſion of good cheer, — not a ſingle inſtance, — as if we were the patients, and his place were to comfort us." [5]

Anxiety about his general health.

The following ſummer wore ſlowly away; not without much anxiety on the part of his family, as to what might be the end of ſo much ſuffering, and whether the patient's infirmities would not be materially aggravated by one of our rigorous winters. Different plans were agitated. At laſt, in the early

[5] Proceedings of the Maſſachuſetts Hiſtorical Society, (Boſton, 1859,) p. 183.

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Travelling proposed.

autumn, it was determined that he should pass the next six months with his grandfather Hickling, Consul of the United States at St. Michael's, and then that he should visit London and Paris for the benefit of such medical advice as he might find in either metropolis; travelling, perhaps, afterwards on the Continent, to recruit the resources of his constitution, which by such long-continued illness had been somewhat impaired. It was a remedy which was not adopted without pain and misgiving on both sides; but it was evidently the best thing to be done, and all submitted to it with patience and hope.

CHAPTER III.

1815–1816.

Visit to St. Michael's. — His Life there. — Suffering in his Eye. — His Letters to his Father and Mother; to his Sister; and to W. H. Gardiner.

IN fulfilment of the plan for travel mentioned in the last chapter, he embarked at Boston, on the 26th of September, 1815, for the Azores. Besides the usual annoyances of a sea voyage in one of the small vessels that then carried on our commerce with the Western Islands, he suffered from the especial troubles of his own case; — sharp attacks of rheumatism and an inflammation of the eye, for which he had no remedies but the twilight of his miserable cabin, and a diet of rye pudding, with no sauce but coarse salt. The passage, too, was tediously long. He did not arrive until the twenty-second day. Before he landed, he wrote to his father and mother, with the freedom and affection which always marked his intercourse with them: —

Voyage to St. Michael's.

"I have been treated," he said, "with every attention by the captain and crew, and my situation rendered as comfortable as possible. But this cabin was never designed for rheumatics. The companion-way opens immediately upon deck, and the patent binnacle illuminators, *vice* windows, are so ingeniously and impartially constructed, that for every ray of light we have half a dozen drops of water. The consequence is, that the orbit of my operations for days together has been very much restricted. I have banished *ennui*, however, by battling with Democrats and bed-bugs, both of which thrive on board this vessel, and in both of which contests I have been ably seconded by the cook, who has officiated as my *valet de chambre*, and in whom I find a great congeniality of sentiment."

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His grandfather and family.

Beautiful country.

An hour after writing this letter, October 18th, he landed. He was most kindly received by his grandfather, — a generous, open-handed, open-hearted gentleman, seventy-two years old, who had long before married a lady of the island as his second wife, and was surrounded by a family of interesting children, some of whom were so near the age of their young nephew of the half-blood, that they made him most agreeable companions and friends. They were all then residing a few miles from Ponta Delgada, the capital of the island of St. Michael's, at a place called Rosto de Cão, from the supposed resemblance of its rocks to the head of a dog. It was a country-house, in the midst of charming gardens and the gayest cultivation. The young American, who had been little from home, and never beyond the influences of the rude climate in which he was born, enjoyed excessively the all but tropical vegetation with which he found himself thus suddenly surrounded; the laurels and myrtles that everywhere sprang wild; and the multitudinous orange-groves which had been cultivated and extended chiefly through his grandfather's spirit and energy, until their fruit had become the staple of the island, while, more than half the year, their flowers filled large portions of it with a delicious fragrance; "Hesperian fables true, if true, here only."

Inflammation of his eye.

His gay spirits.

But his pleasures of this sort were short-lived. He had landed with a slight trouble in his eye, and a fortnight was hardly over before he was obliged to shut himself up with it. From November 1st to February 1st he was in a dark room; — six weeks of the time in such total darkness, that the furniture could not be distinguished; and all the time living on a spare vegetable diet, and applying blisters to keep down active inflammation. But his spirits were proof alike against pain and abstinence. He has often described to me the exercise he took in his large room, — hundreds of miles in all, — walking from corner to corner, and thrusting out his elbows so as to get warning through them of his approach to the angles of the wall, whose plastering he absolutely wore away by the constant

blows he thus inflicted on it. And all this time, he added, with the exception of a few days of acute ſuffering, he ſang aloud, in his darkneſs and ſolitude, with unabated cheer. Later, when a little light could be admitted, he carefully covered his eyes, and liſtened to reading; and, at the worſt, he enjoyed much of the ſociety of his affectionate aunts and couſins.

But he ſhall ſpeak for himſelf, in two or three of the few letters which are preſerved from the period of his reſidence in the Azores and his ſubſequent travels in Europe.

TO HIS FATHER AND MOTHER.

Roſto de Cão, 13 Nov., 1815.

Letter to his father and mother.

It is with heart-felt joy, my beloved parents, that I can addreſs you from this bleſſed little iſle. I landed on Wedneſday, October 18th, at 10 A. M., after a moſt tedious paſſage of twenty-two days, although I had made a fixed determination to arrive in ten. I cannot be thankful enough to Heaven that it had not caſed in theſe rheumatic ſhackles the navigating ſoul of a Cook or a Columbus, for I am very ſure, if a fifth quarter of the globe depended upon me for its expoſure, it would remain *terra incognita* forever. . . . . I was received on the quay by my Uncles Thomas and Ivers, and proceeded immediately to the houſe of the latter, where I diſpoſed of a *neſcio quantum* of bread and milk, to the no ſmall aſtoniſhment of two or three young couſins, who thought it the uſual American appetite.

Ponta Delgada.

The city of Ponta Delgada, as ſeen from the roads, preſents an appearance extremely unique, and, to one who has never been beyond the ſmoke of his own hamlet, ſeems rather enchantment than reality. The brilliant whiteneſs of the buildings, ſituated at the baſe of lofty hills, whoſe ſides are clothed with fields of yellow corn, and the pictureſque, admirably heightened by the turrets which riſe from the numerous convents that diſgrace and beautify the city, preſent a *coup d'œil* on which the genius of a Radcliffe, or indeed any one, much leſs an admirer of the beauties of nature than myſelf, might expend a folio of ſentimentality and nonſenſe. After breakfaſt I proceeded to Roſto de Cão, where I have now the good fortune to be domeſticated. My dear grandfather is preciſely the man I had imagined and wiſhed him to be. Frank and gentlemanly in his deportment, affectionate to his family, and liberal to exceſs in all his feelings, his hand ſerves as the conductor of his heart, and when he ſhakes yours, he communicates all the overflowings of his own benevolent diſpoſition. His bodily virtues are no leſs inſpiring than his mental. He riſes every morning at five, takes a remarkable intereſt in everything that is going forward, and is ſo alert in his motions, that, at a fair ſtart, I would lay any odds he would diſtance the whole of his poſterity. He plumes himſelf not a little upon his conſtitution,

Roſto de Cão.

Mr. Hickling.

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and tells me that I am much more deſerving of the title of 'old boy' than himſelf.

The family.

I ſhould give you a ſort of biography of the whole family, but my aunt, who officiates as ſecretary, abſolutely refuſes to write any more encomiums on them, and, as I have nothing very ill to ſay of them at preſent, I ſhall poſtpone this until you can receive ſome official documents *ſub mea manu*. The truth is, I am ſo lately recovered from a ſlight inflammation, which the rain water, ſalt water, and other marine comforts are ſo well calculated to produce, that I do not care to exert my eyes at preſent, for which reaſon my ideas are communicated to you by the hand of my aunt.

The iſland.

We move into town this week, where I have been but ſeldom ſince my arrival, and have confined my curioſity to ſome equeſtrian excurſions round the country. Novelty of ſcenery is alone ſufficient to intereſt one who has been accuſtomed to the productions of Northern climates. It is very curious, my dear parents, to ſee thoſe plants which one has been accuſtomed to ſee reared in a hot-houſe, flouriſhing beneath the open ſky, and attaining a height and perfection which no artificial heat can command. When I wander amid the groves of boxwood, cypreſs, and myrtle, I feel myſelf tranſported back to the ages of Horace and Anacreon, who conſecrated their ſhades to immortality.

The climate, though very temperate for winter, is much too frigid for ſummer, and before I could venture a flight of poeſy, I ſhould be obliged to thaw out my imagination over a good December fire. The weather is ſo capricious, that the inhabitants are abſolutely amphibious; — if they are in ſunſhine one half of the day, they are ſure to be in water the other half. . . . . .

Give my beſt affection to Aunt A——'s charming family, and be particular reſpecting Mrs. H——'s health. Tell my friends, that, when my eyes are in trim, I ſhall not fail to fatigue their patience.

Remember me to our good people, and think often, my beloved parents, of your truly affectionate ſon,

WILLIAM.

TO HIS SISTER.

St. Michael's, Ponta Delgada, March 12, 1816.

I am happy, my darling ſiſter, in an opportunity of declaring how much I love, and how often I think of you. . . . . .

Since my recovery — to avail myſelf of a ſimile not exactly Homeric — I may be compared to bottled beer, which, when it has been impriſoned a long time, burſts forth with tremendous exploſion, and evaporates in froth and ſmoke. Since my emancipation I have made more noiſe and rattled more nonſenſe than the ball-rooms of Boſton ever witneſſed. Two or three times a week we make excurſions into the country on jacks, a very agreeable mode of riding, and viſit the orangeries, which are now in their *prime*. What a proſpect preſents itſelf for the dead of winter! The country is everywhere in the bloom of vegetation; — the myrtles, the roſes, and laurels are in full bloom, and the dark green

Excurſions.

of the orange groves is finely contrasted with "the golden apples" which glitter through their foliage. Amidst such a scene I feel like a being of another world, new lighted on this distant home. . . . . .

Houses and people.

The houses of this country are built of stone, covered with white lime. They are seldom more than two stories in height, and the lower floors are devoted to the cattle. They are most lavish of expense on their churches, which are profusely ornamented with gilding and carving, which, though poorly executed, produces a wonderful effect by candle-light. They are generally fortified with eight or ten bells, and when a great character walks off the carpet, they keep them in continual jingle, as they have great faith in ringing the soul through Purgatory. When a poor man loses his child, his friends congratulate him on so joyful an occasion; but if his pig dies, they condole with him. I know not but this may be a fair estimate of their relative worth. . . . . .

Earthquakes.

The whole appearance of this country is volcanic. In the environs I have seen acres covered with lava, and incapable of culture, and most of the mountains still retain the vestiges of craters. Scarcely a year passes without an earthquake. I have been so fortunate as to witness the most tremendous of these convulsions within the memory of the present inhabitants. This was on the 1st of February, at midnight. So severe was the shock, that more than forty houses and many of the public edifices were overthrown or injured, and our house cracked in various places from top to bottom. The whole city was thrown into consternation. Our family assembled *en chemise* in the corridor. I was wise enough to keep quiet in bed, as I considered a cold more dangerous to me than an earthquake. But we were all excessively alarmed. There is no visitation more awful than this. From most dangers there is some refuge, but when nature is convulsed, where can we fly? An earthquake is commonly past before one has time to estimate the horrors of his situation; but this lasted three minutes and a half, and we had full leisure to summon up the ghosts of Lisbon and Herculaneum, and many other recollections equally soothing, and I confess the idea of terminating my career in this manner was not the most agreeable of my reflections.

Hot springs.

A few weeks since, my dear sister, I visited some hot springs in Ribèira Grande, at the northern part of the island; but, as I have since been to "the Furnace," where I have seen what is much more wonderful and beautiful in nature, I shall content myself with a description of the latter excursion.

Our road lay through a mountainous country, abounding in wild and picturesque scenery. Our party consisted of about twenty, and we travelled upon jacks, which is the pleasantest conveyance in the world, both from its sociability, and the little fatigue which attends it. As we rode irregularly, our cavalcade had a very romantic appearance; for, while some of us were in the vale, others were on the heights of the mountains, or winding down the declivities, on the brink of precipices two hundred feet perpendicular.

Beautiful valley.

As my imagination was entirely occupied with the volcanic phenomena for which the Furnace is so celebrated, I had formed no ideas of any milder attractions. What was my surprise, then, when, descending the mountains at twilight, there burst upon our view a circular valley, ten miles in circumference, bounded

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on all ſides by lofty hills, and in the richeſt ſtate of cultivation. The evening bell was tolling, as we deſcended into the plain, to inform the inhabitants of ſunſet, — the Angelus, — and this, with the whiſtle of the herdſmen, which in this country is peculiarly plaintive, and the "ſober gray" of evening, all combined to fill my boſom with ſentiments of placid contentment. . . . . .

I conſider it almoſt fruitleſs to attempt to deſcribe the Caldèiras [the Caldrons], as I can convey no adequate idea of their terrible appearance. There are ſeven principal ones, the largeſt about twenty feet in diameter. They are generally circular, but differing both in form and dimenſions. They boil with ſuch fervor as to eject the water to the height of twenty feet, and make a noiſe like diſtant thunder. . . . . .

Grandfather's houſe is ſituated in the centre of this beautiful valley. It has undergone ſeveral alterations ſince mother was here. The entrance is through a long avenue of ſhady box-trees, and you aſcend to it by a flight of fifty ſtone ſteps. Near the houſe is a grove which was not even in embryo when mother was here. In front of it is a pond, with a ſmall iſland in the middle, connected with the main land by a ſtone bridge. In this delightful ſpot I had ſome of the happieſt hours which I have ſpent ſince I quitted my native ſhores. At "Yankee Hall" [1] every one is *ſans ſouci*. The air of the place is remarkably propitious both to good ſpirits and good appetites.[2]

"Yankee Hall."

In my walks I met with many villagers who recollected Donna Catherina,[3] and who teſtified their affection for her ſon in ſuch hearty *embraſſades* as I am not quite Portugueſe enough to reliſh. . . . . .

Adieu, my darling ſiſter. I know not how I ſhall be able to ſend you this letter. I ſhall probably take it with me to London, where opportunities will be much more frequent, and where your patience will be much oftener tried by your ſincerely affectionate

W.

TO WILLIAM H. GARDINER.

Ponta Delgada, St. Michael's, March, 1816.

I am fortunate, my dear Will, in an opportunity of addreſſing you from the orange bowers of St. Michael's, and of acknowledging the receipt of your Gazettes, with their budgets ſcandalous and philoſophical. I muſt pronounce you, my friend, the *optimus editorum*, for, in the language of the commentators, you have not left a ſingle *deſideratum* ungratified. It is impoſſible to be too minute. To one abſent from home trifles are of importance, and the moſt petty occurrences are the more acceptable, as they tranſport us into ſcenes of former happineſs, and engage us in the occupations of thoſe in whom we are the moſt intereſted. I was much diſtreſſed by the death of my two friends. R——'s I had anticipated, but the circumſtances which attended it were pecu-

Death of young friends.

[1] The name of the large houſe his grandfather had built at the "Caldèiras," remembering his own home.

[2] Elſewhere he calls this viſit, "Elyſium, four days."

[3] His mother's Chriſtian name.

liarly afflicting. Few I believe have ſpent ſo long a life in ſo ſhort a period. He certainly had much benevolence of diſpoſition; but there was ſomething uncongenial in his temper, which made him unpopular with the maſs of his acquaintance. If, however, the number of his enemies was great, that of his virtues exceeded them. Thoſe of us who ſhared his friendſhip knew how to appreciate his worth.[4] P——, with leſs ſteadineſs of principle, had many ſocial qualities which endeared him to his friends. The ſprightlineſs of his fancy has beguiled us of many an hour, and the vivacity of his wit, as you well know, has often ſet our table in a roar. . . . . .

Your letters contain a very alarming liſt of marriages and matches. If the mania continues much longer, I ſhall find at my return moſt of my fair companions converted into ſober matrons. I believe I had better adopt your advice, and, to execute it with a little more *éclat*, perſuade ſome kind nun to ſcale the walls of her convent with me.

Nunneries.

Apropos of nunneries: the novelty of the thing has induced me to viſit them frequently, but I find that they anſwer very feebly to thoſe romantic notions of purity and ſimplicity which I had attached to them. Almoſt every nun has a lover; that is, an innamorato who viſits her every day, and ſwears as many oaths of conſtancy, and imprints as many kiſſes on the grates as ever Pyramus and Thiſbe did on the unlucky chink which ſeparated them. I was invited the other day to ſelect one of theſe fair penitents, but, as I have no great reliſh for ſuch a — correſpondence, I declined the politeneſs, and content myſelf with a few ogles and ſighs *en paſſant*.

Portugueſe character.

It is an intereſting employment for the inhabitants of a free country, flouriſhing under the influences of a benign religion, to contemplate the degradation to which human nature may be reduced when oppreſſed by arbitrary power and papal ſuperſtition. My obſervation of the Portugueſe character has half inclined me to credit Monboddo's theory, and conſider the inhabitants in that ſtage of the metamorphoſis when, having loſt the tails of monkeys, they have not yet acquired the brains of men. In mechanical improvements, and in the common arts and conveniences of life, the Portugueſe are at leaſt two centuries behind the Engliſh, and as to literary acquiſitions, if, as ſome writers have pretended, "ignorance is bliſs," they may ſafely claim to be the happieſt people in the world.

Climate.

But, if animated nature is ſo debaſed, the beauties of the inanimate creation cannot be ſurpaſſed. During the whole year we have the unruffled ſerenity of June. Such is the temperature of the climate, that, although but a few degrees ſouth of Boſton, moſt tropical plants will flouriſh; and ſuch is the extreme ſalubrity, that nothing venomous can exiſt. Theſe iſlands, however, abound in volcanic phenomena. I have ſeen whole fields covered with lava, and moſt of the mountains ſtill retain the veſtiges of craters. I have, too, had the pleaſure of experiencing an earthquake, which ſhook down a good number of houſes, and I hope I ſhall not ſoon be gratified with a ſimilar exhibition.

But the moſt wonderful of the natural curioſities are the hot wells, which

[4] A college friend of great promiſe who died in England in 1815.

CHAP. III. 1816: ÆT. 19.

Fertility of the island.

are very numerous, and of which it would be impoſſible to give you an adequate conception. The fertility of the ſoil is ſo great, that they generally obtain two crops in a year, and now, while you are looking wofully out of the window waiting for the laſt ſtroke of the bell before you encounter the terrific ſnow-banks which threaten you, with us the myrtle, the roſe, the pomegranate, the lemon and orange groves are in perfection, and the whole country glowing in full bloom. Indeed, there is everything which can catch the poet's eye, but you know, *Sine Venere, friget Apollo*, and, until ſome Azorian nymph ſhall warm my heart into love, the beauties of nature will hardly warm my imagination into poeſy.

I muſt confeſs, however, that friendſhip induced me to make an effort this way. I have been confined to my chamber for ſome time by an indiſpoſition; and while in dureſs I commenced a poetical effuſion to you, and had actually completed a page, when, recovering my liberty, there were ſo many ſtrange objects to attract the attention, and I thought it ſo much leſs trouble to manufacture bad proſe than bad poetry, that I diſmounted from Pegaſus, whom, by the by, I found a confounded hard trotter. Now, as you are profeſſedly one of the *genus irritabile*, I think you cannot employ your leiſure better than in ſerving me an Horatian diſh *ſecundum artem*. Give my warmeſt affection to your father, mother, and ſiſters, and be aſſured, my dear Will, whether rhyme or reaſon, your epiſtles will ever confer the higheſt gratification on your friend,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO HIS FATHER AND MOTHER.

St. Michael's, March 15, 1816.

Inflammation of his eye.

I cannot regret, my beloved parents, that the opportunities of writing have not been more frequent; for, although it would be cruel to inform you of diſtreſſes, while actually exiſting, which it was not in your power to alleviate, yet it is ſo ſoothing to the mind to communicate its griefs, that I doubt if I could refrain from it.

The windows in Roſto de Cão are conſtructed on much the ſame principle as our barn-doors. Their uncharitable quantity of light and a ſlight cold increaſed the inflammation with which I landed to ſuch a degree, that, as I could not ſoften the light by means of blinds, which are unknown here, I was obliged to exclude it altogether by cloſing the ſhutters. The ſame cauſe retarded my recovery; for, as the ſun introduced himſelf *ſans cérémonie* whenever I attempted to admit the light, I was obliged to remain in darkneſs until we removed to the city, where I was accommodated with a room which had a northern aſpect, and, by means of different thicknéſſes of baize nailed to the windows, I was again reſtored to the cheering beams of heaven. This confinement laſted from the 1ſt of November to the 1ſt of February, and during ſix weeks of it I was in ſuch total darkneſs it was impoſſible to diſtinguiſh objects in the room. Much

of this time has been beguiled of its tediouſneſs by the attentions of A—— and H——, particularly the latter, who is a charming creature, and whom I regard as a ſecond ſiſter.

Remedies.

I have had an abundance of good preſcriptions. Grandfather has ſtrongly urged old Madeira as a univerſal noſtrum, and my good uncle the doctor no leſs ſtrenuouſly recommended beef-ſteak. I took their advice, for it coſt me nothing; but, as following it coſt me rather too dear, I adhered with Chineſe obſtinacy to bread and milk, haſty pudding, and gruel. This diet and the application of bliſters was the only method I adopted to preſerve my eye from inflammation.

Good ſpirits.

I have not often, my dear parents, experienced depreſſion of ſpirits, and there have been but few days in which I could not ſolace my ſorrows with a ſong. I preſerved my health by walking on the piazza with a handkerchief tied over a pair of goggles, which were preſented to me by a gentleman here, and by walking ſome hundreds of miles in my room, ſo that I emerged from my dungeon, not with the emaciated figure of a priſoner, but in the florid bloom of a *bon vivant*. Indeed, everything has been done which could promote my health and happineſs; but darkneſs has few charms for thoſe in health, and a long confinement muſt exhauſt the patience of all but thoſe who are immediately intereſted in us. A perſon ſituated as I have been can be really happy nowhere but at home, for where but at home can he experience the affectionate ſolicitude of parents. But the gloom is now diſſipated, and my eyes have nearly recovered their former vigor. I am under no apprehenſion of a relapſe, as I ſhall ſoon be wafted to a land where the windows are of Chriſtian dimenſions, and the medical advice ſuch as may be relied upon.

The moſt unpleaſant of my reflections ſuggeſted by this late inflammation are thoſe ariſing from the probable neceſſity of abandoning a profeſſion congenial with my taſte, and recommended by ſuch favorable opportunities, and adopting one for which I am ill qualified, and have but little inclination. It is ſome conſolation, however, that this latter alternative, ſhould my eyes permit, will afford me more leiſure for the purſuit of my favorite ſtudies. But on this ſubject I ſhall conſult my phyſician, and will write you his opinion. My mind has not been wholly ſtagnant during my reſidence here. By means of the bright eyes of H—— I have read part of Scott, Shakeſpeare, Travels through England and Scotland, the Iliad, and the Odyſſey. A—— has read ſome of the Grecian and Roman hiſtories, and I have cheated many a moment of its tedium by compoſition, which was ſoon baniſhed from my mind for want of an amanuenſis.

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CHAPTER IV.

1816.

Leaves St. Michael's. — Arrives in London. — Privations there. — Pleaſures. — Goes to Paris. — Goes to Italy. — Returns to Paris. — Illneſs there. — Goes again to London. — Travels little in England. — Determines to return Home. — Letter to W. H. Gardiner.

CHAP. IV. 1816. ÆT. 20.

Relations to his grandfather's family.

THIS relations to the family of his venerable grandfather at St. Michael's, as the preceding letters ſhow, were of the moſt agreeable kind, and the effect produced by his character on all its members, old and young, was the ſame that it produced on everybody. They all loved him. His grandmother, with whom, from the difference of their languages, he could have had a leſs free intercourſe than with the reſt, wept bitterly when he left them; and his patriarchal grandfather, who had, during his long life, been called to give up ſeveral of his houſe to the claims of the world, preſſed him often in his arms on the beach, and, as the tears rolled down his aged cheeks, cried out, in the bitterneſs of his heart, "God knows, it never coſt me more to part from any of my own children."

Voyage to England.

On the 8th of April, 1816, he embarked for London. His acute rheumatiſm and the conſequent inflammation in his eye recurred almoſt of courſe, from the expoſures incident to a ſea life with few even of the uſual allowances of ſea comforts.

He was, therefore, heartily glad when, after a paſſage prolonged to four and twenty days, two and twenty of which he had been confined to his ſtate-room, and kept on the moſt meagre fare, his ſuffering eye reſted on the green fields of Old England.

London.

In London he placed himſelf in the hands of Dr. Farre; of Mr. Cooper, afterwards Sir Aſtley Cooper; and of Sir William Adams, the oculiſt. He could not, perhaps, have done better. But his caſe admitted of no remedy and few alleviations; for it was aſcertained, at once, that the eye originally injured was completely paralyzed, and that for the other little could be done except to add to its ſtrength by ſtrengthening the whole phyſical ſyſtem. He followed, however, as he almoſt always did, even when his hopes were the fainteſt, all the preſcriptions that were given him, and ſubmitted conſcientiouſly to the privations that were impoſed. He ſaw few perſons that could much intereſt him, becauſe evening ſociety was forbidden, and he went to public places and exhibitions rarely, and to the theatre never, although he was ſorely tempted by the farewell London performances of Mrs. Siddons and Mr. John Kemble. A friend begged him to uſe an excellent library as if it were his own; "but," he wrote to his father and mother, "when I look into a Greek or Latin book, I experience much the ſame ſenſation one does who looks on the face of a dead friend, and the tears not infrequently ſteal into my eyes." He made a ſingle excurſion from London. It was to Richmond; viſiting at the ſame time Slough, where he ſaw Herſchel's teleſcopes, Eton, Windſor, and Hampton Court, — all with Mr. John Quincy Adams, then our Miniſter at the Court of St. James. It was an excurſion which he mentions with great pleaſure in one of his letters. He could, indeed, hardly have made it more agreeably or more profitably. But this was his only pleaſure of the ſort.

A freſh and eager ſpirit, however, like his, could not ſtand amidſt the reſources of a metropolis ſo magnificent as London without recognizing their power. Enjoyments, therefore, he

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Elgin Marbles and Cartoons of Raphael.

certainly had, and, if they were rare, they were high. Nothing in the way of art ſtruck him ſo much as the Elgin Marbles and the Cartoons of Raphael. Of the firſt, which he viſited as often as he dared to, he ſays, "There are few living beings in whoſe ſociety I have experienced ſo much real pleaſure," and of the laſt, that "they pleaſed him a great deal more than the Stafford collection." It may, as it ſeems to me, be fairly accounted remarkable, that one whoſe taſte in ſculpture and painting could not have been cultivated at home ſhould at once have felt the ſupremacy of thoſe great works of ancient and modern art, then much leſs acknowledged than it is now, and even yet, perhaps, not ſo fully confeſſed as it will be.

He went frequently to the public libraries and to the principal bookſellers' ſhops, full of precious editions of the claſſics which he had found it ſo difficult to obtain in his own country, and which he ſo much coveted now. But of everything connected with books his enjoyment was neceſſarily imperfect. At this period he rarely opened them. He purchaſed a few, however, truſting to the future, as he always did.

Paris.

Early in Auguſt he went over to Paris, and remained there, or in its neighborhood, until October. But Paris could hardly be enjoyed by him ſo much as London, where his mother tongue made everything ſeem familiar in a way that nothing elſe can. He ſaw, indeed, a good deal of what is external; although, even in this, he was checked by care for his eye, and by at leaſt one decided acceſs of inflammation. Anything, however, beyond the moſt imperfect view of what he viſited was out of the queſtion.

The following winter, which he paſſed in Italy, was probably beneficial to his health, ſo far as his implacable enemy, the rheumatiſm, was concerned, and certainly it was full of enjoyment. He travelled with his old ſchoolfellow and friend, Mr. John Chipman Gray, who did much to make the journey pleaſant to him. After leaving Paris, they firſt ſtopped a day at La Grange to pay their reſpects to General La Fayette, and then

Viſits La Fayette.

Travels in Italy.

went by Lyons, the Mont Cenis, Turin, Genoa, Milan, Venice, Bologna, and Florence to Rome. In Rome they remained about ſix weeks; after which, giving a month to Naples, they returned through Rome to Florence, and, embarking at Leghorn for Marſeilles, made a ſhort viſit to Niſmes, not forgetting Avignon and Vaucluſe, and then haſtened by Fontainebleau to Paris, where they arrived on the 30th of March. It was the cuſtomary route, and the young travellers ſaw what all travellers ſee, neither more nor leſs, and enjoyed it as all do who have cultivation like theirs and good taſte. In a letter written to me the next year, when I was myſelf in Italy, he ſpeaks with great intereſt of his viſit there, and ſeems to regret Naples more than any other portion of that charming country. But twenty and alſo forty years later, when I was again in Italy, his letters to me were full, not of Naples, but of Rome. "Rome is the place," he ſaid, "that lingers longeſt, I ſuppoſe, in everybody's recollection; at leaſt, it is the brighteſt of all I ſaw in Europe." This was natural. It was the reſult of the different viſtas through which, at widely different periods of his life, he looked back upon what he had ſo much enjoyed.

No thought of Spaniſh conqueſts there.

One thing, however, in relation to his Italian journeyings, though not remarkable at the time, appears ſingular now, when it is ſeen in the light of his ſubſequent career. He paſſed over the battle-fields of Gonſalvo de Cordova, and all that made the Spaniſh arms in Italy ſo illuſtrious in the time of Ferdinand and Iſabella, without a remark, and, I ſuppoſe, without a thought. But, as he often ſaid afterwards, and, indeed, more than once wrote to me, he was then freſh from the claſſical ſtudies he ſo much loved; Horace and Livy, I know, were ſuſpended in the net of his travelling-carriage; and he thought more, I doubt not, of Cæſar and Cicero, Tacitus and Virgil, than of all the moderns put together.

Indeed, the moderns were, in one ſenſe, beyond his reach. He was unable to give any of his time to the language or the literature of Italy, ſo wholly were his eyes unfitted for uſe. But he was content with what his condition permitted; — to

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Lives with the ancients.

walk about among the ruins of earlier ages, and occaſionally look up a paſſage in an ancient claſſic to explain or illuſtrate them. The *genius loci* was at his ſide wherever he went, and ſhowed him things inviſible to mortal ſight. As he ſaid in one of his letters to me, it was to him "all a ſacred land," and the mighty men of old ſtood before him in the place of the living.

Paris.

A few days after he reached Paris, April 7, I arrived there from Germany, where I had been paſſing nearly two years; and, as we both had accidentally the ſame banker, our lodgings had been engaged for us at the ſame hotel. In this way he was one of the very firſt perſons I ſaw when I alighted. His parlor, I found, was darkened, and his eye was ſtill too ſenſitive for any healthy uſe of it; but his ſpirits were light, and his enthuſiaſm about his Italian journey was quite contagious. We walked a little round the city together, and dined that day with our hoſpitable banker very gayly. But this was the laſt of his pleaſures in Paris. When we reached our hotel, he complained of feeling unwell, and I was ſo much alarmed by the ſtate of his pulſe that I went perſonally for his phyſician, and brought him back with me, fearing, as it was already late at night, that there might otherwiſe be ſome untoward delay. The reſult ſhowed that I had not been unreaſonably anxious.

Severe illneſs.

The moſt active treatment was inſtantly adopted, and abſolute quiet preſcribed. I watched with him that night; and, as I had yet made no acquaintances in Paris, and felt no intereſt there, ſo ſtrong as my intereſt in him, I ſhut myſelf up with him, and thought little of what was outſide the walls of our hotel till he was better.

I was, in fact, much alarmed. Nor was he inſenſible to his poſition, which the ſeverity of the remedies adminiſtered left no doubt was a critical one. But he maintained his compoſure throughout, begging me, however, not to tell him that his illneſs was dangerous unleſs I ſhould think it indiſpenſable to do ſo. In three or four days my apprehenſions were relieved. In eight or ten more, during which I was much with him, he

was able to go out, and in another week he was reſtored. But it was in that dark room that I firſt learned to know him as I have never known any other perſon beyond the limits of my immediate family, and it was there that was firſt formed a mutual regard over which, to the day of his death, — a period of above forty years, — no cloud ever paſſed.

In the middle of May, after making a pleaſant viſit of a week to Mr. Daniel Parker[1] at Draveil, he left Paris, and went, by the way of Brighton, to London, where he remained about ſix weeks, viſiting anew, ſo far as his infirmities would permit, what was moſt intereſting to him, and liſtening more than he had done before to debates in the Houſe of Lords and the Houſe of Commons. But the country gave him more pleaſure than the city. His eyes ſuffered leſs there, and, beſides, he was always ſenſible to what is beautiful in nature. Two excurſions that he made gratified him very much. One was to Oxford, Blenheim, and the Wye; in which the Gothic architecture of New-College Chapel and the graceful ruins of Tintern Abbey, with the valley in which they ſtand, moſt attracted his admiration, the laſt "ſurpaſſing," as he ſaid, "anything of the ſort he had ever ſeen." He came back by Saliſbury, and then almoſt immediately went to Cambridge, where he was more intereſted by the manuſcripts of Milton and Newton than by anything elſe, unleſs, perhaps, it were King's College Chapel. But, after all, this viſit to England was very unſatisfactory. He ſpoke to me in one of his letters of being "invigorated by the rational atmoſphere of London," in compariſon with his life on the Continent. But ſtill the ſtate of his eyes, and even of his general health, deprived him of many enjoyments which his viſit would otherwiſe have afforded him. He was, therefore, well pleaſed to turn his face towards the comforts of home.

Goes to London.

Travels in England.

[1] Mr. Parker was an American gentleman, who lived very pleaſantly on a fine eſtate at Draveil, near Paris. Mr. Preſcott was more than once at his hoſpitable château, and enjoyed his viſits there much. It was there he firſt became acquainted with Mr. Charles King, ſubſequently diſtinguiſhed in political life and as the Preſident of Columbia College, who, after the death of the hiſtorian, pronounced a juſt and beautiful eulogium on him before the New-York Hiſtorical Society, Feb. 1, 1859.

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Of all this, pleaſant intimations may be found in the following letter to his friend Gardiner: —

Letter to W. H. Gardiner.

London, 29th May, 1817.

I never felt in my life more inclined to ſcold any one, my dear Gardiner, than I do to ſcold you at preſent, and I ſhould not let you off ſo eaſily but that my return will prevent the benefits of a reformation. You have ere this received a folio of hieroglyphics which I tranſmitted to you from Rome.[2] To read them, I am aware, is impoſſible; for, as I was folding them up, I had occaſion to refer to ſomething, and found myſelf utterly unable to decipher my own writing. I preferred, however, to ſend them, for, although unintelligible, they would at leaſt be a ſubſtantial evidence to my friend that I had not forgotten him. As you probably have been made acquainted with my route by my family, I ſhall not trouble you with the details.

Journeys to Italy and France.

Notwithſtanding the many and various objects which Italy poſſeſſes, they are accompanied with ſo many *désagrémens*, — poor inns, worſe roads, and, above all, the mean ſpirit and diſhoneſty of its inhabitants, — that we could not regret the termination of our tour. I was disappointed in France, that is to ſay, the country. That part of it which I have ſeen, excepting Marſeilles, Niſmes, Avignon, and Lyons, poſſeſſes few beauties of nature, and little that is curious or worthy of remark. Paris is everything in France. It is certainly unique. With a great parade of ſcience and literary inſtitutions, it unites a conſtant ſucceſſion of frivolities and public amuſements. I was pleaſed as long as the novelty laſted, and ſatiated in leſs than two months. The moſt cheerful mind muſt become dull amidſt unintermitted gayety and diſſipation, unleſs it is conſtructed upon a French anatomy.

I left —— in a retired part of the city, diligently occupied with the tranſition of the Roman language into the Italian, and with the ancient French Provençal dialect. There are ſome men who can unravel problems in the midſt of a ball-room. In the fall —— goes down to Italy.

. . . . . .

Travelling bad for his eye.

I have now been a fortnight in London. Its ſea-coal atmoſphere is extremely favorable to my health. I am convinced, however, that travelling is pernicious, and, inſtead of making the long tour of Scotland, ſhall content myſelf with excurſions to the principal counties and manufacturing towns in England. In a couple of months I hope to embark, and ſhall ſoon have the pleaſure of recapitulating with you, my friend, my perils and experiences, and treading in retroſpection the claſſic ground of Italy. I ſincerely hope you may one day viſit a country which contains ſo much that is intereſting to any man of liberal education. . . . . .

I anticipate with great pleaſure the reſtoration to my friends; to thoſe domeſtic and ſocial enjoyments which are little known in the great capitals of Europe. Pray give my warmeſt regards to your father, mother, and ſiſters, and *n'oubliez jamais*

Your ſincerely affectionate

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

[2] Written with his noctograph.

CHAPTER V.

1817–1824.

Return from England. — Rheumatism. — First Literary Adventure. — Decides not to be a Lawyer. — Falls in Love. — Marries. — Continues to live with his Father. — Swords of his Grandfather and of the Grandfather of his Wife. — His Personal Appearance. — Club of Friends. — The "Club-Room." — Determines to become a Man of Letters. — Obstacles in his Way. — Efforts to overcome them. — English Studies. — French. — Italian. — Opinion of Petrarch and of Dante. — Further Studies proposed. — Despairs of learning German.

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His return home.

HE embarked from England for home at midsummer, and arrived before the heats of our hot season were over. His affectionate mother had arranged everything for his reception that could insure the rest he needed, and the alleviations which, for an invalid such as he was, can never be found except in the bosom of his family. Fresh

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paper and paint were put on his own room, and everything external was made bright and cheerful to welcome his return. But it was all a miſtake. His eye, to the great diſappointment of his friends, had not been ſtrengthened during his abſence, and could ill bear the colors that had been provided to cheer him. The white paint was, therefore, forthwith changed to gray, and the walls and carpet became green. But neither was this thought enough. A charming country-houſe was procured, ſince Nature furniſhes truer carpets and hangings than the upholſterer; but the houſe was damp from its cool poſition, and from the many trees that ſurrounded it.[1] His old enemy, the rheumatiſm, therefore, ſet in with renewed force; and in three days, juſt as his father was driving out to dine, for the firſt time, in their rural home, he met them all hurrying back to the houſe in town, where they remained nearly two years, finding it better for the invalid than any other. It was a large, comfortable old manſion in Bedford Street, and ſtood where the Second Congregational Church now ſtands.

Secluded life.

The winter of 1817–18 he paſſed wholly at home. As he wrote to me, his "eyes made him a very domeſtic, retired man." He avoided ſtrong light as much as he could; and, extravagantly as he loved ſociety, indulged himſelf in it not at all, becauſe he found, or rather becauſe he thought he found, its excitements injurious to him. But his old ſchoolfellow and friend Gardiner, who was then a ſtudent-at-law in the elder Mr. Preſcott's office, read ſome of his favorite claſſics with him a part of each day; and his ſiſter, three years younger than he was, ſhut herſelf up with him the reſt of it, in the moſt devoted and affectionate manner, reading to him ſometimes ſix or even eight hours conſecutively. On theſe occaſions he uſed to place himſelf in the corner of the room, with his face to the angle made by the walls, and his back to the light. Adjuſted thus, they read hiſtory and poetry, often very far into the night, and, although the reader, as ſhe tells me, ſometimes

His ſiſter devotes herſelf to him.

[1] This account is taken from the memoranda of his ſiſter, Mrs. Dexter, whose graceful words I have ſometimes uſed both here and elſewhere in the next few pages.

dozed, he never did. It was a great enjoyment to them both,— to her, one of the greateſt of her life; but it was found too much for her ſtrength, and the father and mother interfered to reſtrain and regulate what was unreaſonable in the indulgence.

Writes a review.

It was during this period that he made his firſt literary adventure. The North-American Review had then been in exiſtence two or three years, and was already an extremely reſpectable journal, with which ſome of his friends were connected. It offered a tempting opportunity for the exerciſe of his powers, and he prepared an article for it. The project was a deep ſecret, and when the article was finiſhed, it was given to his much truſted ſiſter to copy. He felt, ſhe thinks, ſome miſgivings, but on the whole looked with favor on his firſt-born. It was ſent anonymouſly to the club of gentlemen who then managed the Review, and nothing was heard in reply for a week or more. The two who were in the ſecret began, therefore, to conſider their venture ſafe, and the dignity of authorſhip, his ſiſter ſays, ſeemed to be creeping over him, when one day he brought back the article to her, ſaying: "There! it is good for nothing. They refuſe it. I was a fool to ſend it." The ſiſter was offended. But he was not. He only cautioned her not to tell of his failure.

Gives up all thoughts of a profeſſional life.

He was now nearly twenty-two years old, and it was time to conſider what ſhould be his courſe in life. So far as the profeſſion of the law was concerned, this queſtion had been ſubſtantially ſettled by circumſtances over which he had no control. His earlieſt miſgivings on the ſubject ſeemed to have occurred during his long and painful confinement at St. Michael's, and may be found in a letter, already inſerted, which was written March 15th, 1816.

A little later, after conſulting eminent members of the medical profeſſion in London, he wrote more deciſively and more deſpondingly: "As to the future, it is too evident I ſhall never be able to purſue a profeſſion. God knows how poorly I am qualified, and how little inclined, to be a merchant. Indeed, I

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am ſadly puzzled to think how I ſhall ſucceed even in this without eyes, and am afraid I ſhall never be able to draw upon my mind to any large amount," — a ſingular prophecy when we conſider that his ſubſequent life for nearly forty years was a perſiſtent contradiction of it.

After his return home this important queſtion became, of courſe, ſtill more preſſing, and was debated in his family with conſtantly increaſing anxiety. At the ſame time he began to doubt whether the purely domeſtic life he was leading was the beſt for him. The experiment of a year's ſecluſion, he was ſatisfied, and ſo were his medical adviſers, had reſulted in no improvement to his ſight, and promiſed nothing for the future if it ſhould be continued. He began, therefore, to go abroad, gradually and cautiouſly at firſt, but afterwards freely. No harm followed, and from this time, except during periods when there was ſome eſpecial inflammation of the eye, he always mingled freely in a wide range of ſociety, giving and receiving great pleaſure.

Goes into ſociety.

The conſequence followed that might have been anticipated from a nature at once ſo ſuſceptible and ſo attractive. He ſoon found one to whom he was glad to intruſt the happineſs of his life. Nor was he diſappointed in his hopes; for, if there was ever a devoted wife, or a tender and grateful huſband, they were to be found in the home which this union made happy. As he ſaid in a letter long afterwards, "Contrary to the aſſertion of La Bruyère, — who ſomewhere ſays, that the moſt fortunate huſband finds reaſon to regret his condition at leaſt once in twenty-four hours, — I may truly ſay that I have found no ſuch day in the quarter of a century that Providence has ſpared us to each other." And ſo it continued to the laſt. I am ſure that none who knew them will think me miſtaken. The lady was Suſan, daughter of Thomas C. Amory, Eſq., a ſucceſsful and cultivated merchant, who died in 1812, and of Hannah Linzee, his wife, who ſurvived him, enjoying the great happineſs of her child, until 1845.

Falls in love.

In the ſummer of 1819 I returned from Europe, after an

His great happiness.

absence of more than four years. The first friends who welcomed me in my home, on the day of my arrival, were the Prescott family; and the first house I visited was theirs, in which from that day I was always received as if I were of their kin and blood. William was then in the freshest glow of a young happiness which it was delightful to witness, and of which he thought for some months much more than he did of anything else. I saw him constantly; but it was apparent that, although he read a good deal, or rather listened to a good deal of reading, he studied very little, or not at all. Real work was out of the question. He was much too happy for it.

He is married.

On the evening of the 4th of May, 1820, which was his twenty-fourth birthday, he was married at the house of Mrs. Amory, in Franklin Place. It was a wedding with a supper, in the old-fashioned style, somewhat solemn and stately at first; many elderly people being of the party, and especially an aged grandmother of the bride, whose presence enforced something of formality. But later in the evening our gayety was free in proportion to the restraints that had previously been laid upon it.[2]

The young couple went immediately to the house of the Prescott family in Bedford Street, — the same house, by a pleasant coincidence, in which Miss Linzee, the mother of the bride, had been married to Mr. Amory five and twenty years before; and there they lived as long as that ample and comfortable old mansion stood.[3]

Another coincidence connected with this marriage should be added, although it was certainly one that augured little of the happiness that followed. The grandfathers of Mr. Prescott

[2] Prescott always liked puns, and made a good many of them, — generally very bad. But one may be recorded. It was *apropos* of his marriage to Miss *Amory*, for which, when he was joked by some of his young bachelor friends as a deserter from their ranks, he shook his finger at them, and repeated the adage of Virgil: —

"Omnia vincit Amor et nos cedamus *Amori*."

[3] It was pulled down in 1845, and we all sorrowed for it, and for the venerable trees by which it was surrounded. See vignette at the head of this chapter.

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Colonel Preſcott and Captain Linzee.

and Miſs Amory had been engaged on oppoſite ſides during the war for American Independence, and even on oppoſite ſides of the ſame fight; Colonel Preſcott having commanded on Bunker Hill, while Captain Linzee, of the ſloop-of-war Falcon, cannonaded him and his redoubt from the waters of Charles River, where the Falcon was moored during the whole of the battle. The ſwords that had been worn by the ſoldier and the ſailor on that memorable day came down as heirlooms in their reſpective families, until at laſt they met in the library of the man of letters, where, quietly croſſed over his books, they often excited the notice alike of ſtrangers and of friends. After his death they were transferred, as he had deſired, to the Hiſtorical Society of Maſſachuſetts, on whoſe walls they have become the memorials at once of a hard-fought field and of "victories no leſs renowned than thoſe of war." A more appropriate reſting-place for them could not have been found. And there, we truſt, they may reſt in peace ſo long as the two nations ſhall exiſt, — trophies, indeed, of the paſt, but warnings for the future.[4]

Preſcott's perſonal beauty.

At the time of his marriage my friend was one of the fineſt-looking men I have ever ſeen; or, if this ſhould be deemed in ſome reſpects a ſtrong expreſſion, I ſhall be fully juſtified, by thoſe who remember him at that period, in ſaying that he was one of the moſt attractive. He was tall, well formed, manly in his bearing but gentle, with light-brown hair that was hardly changed or diminiſhed by years, with a clear complexion and a ruddy fluſh on his cheek that kept for him to the laſt an appearance of comparative youth, but, above all, with a ſmile that was the moſt abſolutely contagious I ever looked upon. As he grew older, he ſtooped a little. His father's figure was bent at even an earlier age, but it was from an organic infirmity of the cheſt, unknown to the conſtitution of the ſon, who ſtooped chiefly from a downward inclination which he inſtinctively gave to his head ſo as to protect his eye from the light. But his manly character and air were always, to a remarkable

[4] See Appendix B.

degree, the ſame. Even in the laſt months of his life, when he was in ſome other reſpects not a little changed, he appeared at leaſt ten years younger than he really was. And as for the gracious, ſunny ſmile that ſeemed to grow ſweeter as he grew older, it was not entirely obliterated even by the touch of death. Indeed, take him for all in all, I think no man ever walked our ſtreets, as he did day by day, that attracted ſuch regard and good-will from ſo many; for, however few he might know, there were very many that knew him, and watched him with unſpoken welcomes as he paſſed along.

A little before his marriage he had, with a few friends nearly of his own age and of ſimilar taſtes, arranged a club for purpoſes both ſocial and literary. Their earlieſt informal gathering was in June, 1818. On the firſt evening they numbered nine, and on the ſecond, twelve. Soon, the number was ſtill further enlarged; but only twenty-four were at any time brought within its circle; and of theſe, after an interval of above forty years, eleven ſtill ſurvive (1862).[5] His Club.

Preſcott, from his happy, ſocial nature, as well as from his love of letters, was eminently fitted to be one of the members of ſuch a club, and rarely failed to be preſent at its meetings, which he always enjoyed. In their earlieſt days, after the

[5] The names of the members of this happy, scholar-like little club were, —

*Alexander Bliſs,
*John Brazer,
*George Auguſtus Frederic Dawſon,
*Franklin Dexter,
*Samuel Atkins Eliot,
*William Havard Eliot,
Charles Folſom,
William Howard Gardiner,
John Chipman Gray,
*Francis William Pitt Greenwood,
*Enoch Hale,
Charles Greely Loring,
William Powell Maſon,
John Gorham Palfrey,
Theophilus Parſons,
Octavius Pickering,
*William Hickling Preſcott,
Jared Sparks,
*William Jones Spooner,
*Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright,
John Ware,
Henry Warren,
*Martin Whiting,
*Francis William Winthrop.

Thoſe marked with an aſteriſk are dead; but it may be worth notice that, although ſeveral of the moſt promiſing members of the club died ſo young that the time for their diſtinction never came, more than half of the whole number have been known as authors, no one of whom has failed to do credit to the aſſociation in which his youth, in part at leaſt, was trained.

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fashion of such youthful societies, they read papers of their own composition, and amused themselves by criticising one another, and sometimes their neighbors. As a natural consequence of such intercourse, it was not long before they began to think that a part, at least, of what they had written was too good to be confined to their own meetings; and chiefly, I believe, under Prescott's leading, they determined to institute a periodical, or rather a work which should appear at uncertain intervals, and be as little subject to rules and restrictions of any sort as their own gay meetings were. At any rate, if he were not the first to suggest the project, he was the most earnest in promoting it after it was started, and was naturally enough, both from his leisure and his tastes, made editor.

Its meetings.

"The Club Room."

It was called "The Club Room," and the first number was published February 5th, 1820. But its life, though it seems to have been a merry one, was short; for the fourth and last number appeared on the 19th of July of the same year. Nor was there any especial reason to lament its fate as untimely. It was not better than the average of such publications, perhaps not so good. Prescott, I think, brought but three contributions to it. The first is the leading article in the second number, and gives, not without humor, an account of the way in which the first number had been received when it was ushered into a busy, bustling world, too careless of such claims to its notice. The others were tales; one of which, entitled "The Vale of Alleriot," was more sentimental than he would have liked later; and one, "Calais," was a story which Allston, our great artist, used to tell with striking effect. Neither of them had anything characteristic of what afterwards distinguished their author, and neither could be expected to add much to the popular success of such a publication. The best of the contributions to it were, I think, three by Mr. Franklin Dexter, his brother-in-law; two entitled "Recollections," and the other, "The Ruins of Rome";[6] the very last being, in fact, a humorous anticipation of the mean and miserable

Its character.

[6] See a notice of him in the account of the Prescott Family, Appendix (A).

appearance Boſton would make, if its chief edifices ſhould crumble away, and become what thoſe of the miſtreſs of the ancient world are now. "And here ended this precious publication," as its editor, apparently with a ſlight feeling of vexation, recorded its failure. Not that he could be much mortified at its fate; for, if it was nothing elſe, it was an undertaking creditable to the young men who engaged in it ſo as to accuſtom themſelves to write for the public, and it had, beſides, not only enlivened their evenings, but raiſed the tone of their intercourſe with each other.[7]

When the laſt number of The Club Room appeared, its editor had been married two months. The world was before him. His deciſion to give up the law as a profeſſion was not only made, but he had become aware that he muſt find ſome other ſerious occupation to take its place; for he was one of thoſe who early diſcover that labor is the condition of happineſs, and even of content, in this world. His ſelection of a purſuit, however, was not ſuddenly made. It could not be. Many

7 I cannot refuſe my readers or myſelf the pleaſure of inſerting here a faithful account of Preſcott's relations to this club, given to me by one of its original founders and conſtant ſupporters, in ſome ſketches already referred to; I mean his friend Mr. William H. Gardiner.

"The club formed in 1818, for literary and ſocial objects combined, at firſt a ſupper and afterwards a dinner club, was, to the end of our friend's days, — a period of more than forty years, — a ſource of high enjoyment to him. It came to be a peculiar aſſociation, becauſe compoſed of men of nearly the ſame age, who grew up together in thoſe habits of eaſy, familiar intercourſe which can hardly exiſt except where the foundations are laid in very young days. He was, from the firſt, a leading ſpirit there, latterly quite the life and ſoul of the little company, and an object of particular affection as well as pride. He was always diſtinguiſhed there by ſome particular *ſobriquet*. At firſt, we uſed to call him 'the gentleman,' from the circumſtance of his being the only member who had neither profeſſion nor oſtenſible purſuit. For many years he was called 'the editor,' from his having aſſumed to edit, in its day, the little magazine that has been mentioned, called 'The Club Room.' Finally, he won the more diſtinguiſhed title of 'the hiſtorian,' and was often ſo addreſſed in the familiar talk of the club. It compriſed ſeveral of Mr. Preſcott's moſt intimate, perſonal friends. The moſt perfect freedom prevailed there. All ſorts of ſubjects took their turn of diſcuſſion. So that, were it poſſible to recall particulars of his converſations at theſe meetings, extending through two thirds of his whole life, the reader would gain a very perfect idea of him as a ſocial man. But the ἔπεα πτερόεντα are too fleeting for reproduction; and even their ſpirit and effect can hardly be gathered from mere general deſcriptions."

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circumſtances in relation to it were to be weighed, and he had many miſgivings, and heſitated long. But his taſtes and employments had always tended in one direction, and therefore, although the deciſion might be delayed, the reſult was all but inevitable. He choſe a life of literary occupation; and it was well that he choſe it ſo deliberately, for he had time, before he entered on its more ſerious labors, to make an eſtimate of the difficulties that he muſt encounter in the long path ſtretched out before him.

Determines on a literary life.

In this way he became fully aware, that, owing to the infirmity under which he had now ſuffered during more than ſix of the moſt important years of his life, he had much to do before he could hope even to begin a career that ſhould end with ſuch ſucceſs as is worth ſtriving for. In many reſpects, the very foundations were to be laid, and his firſt thought was that they ſhould be laid deep and ſure. He had never neglected his claſſical ſtudies, and now he gave himſelf afreſh to them during a fixed portion of each day. But his more conſiderable deficiencies were in all modern literature. Of the Engliſh he had probably read as much as moſt perſons of his age and condition, or rather it had been read to him; but this had been chiefly for his amuſement in hours of pain and darkneſs, not as a matter of ſtudy, and much leſs upon a regular ſyſtem. French he had ſpoken a little, though not well, while he was in France and Italy; but he knew almoſt nothing of French literature. And of Italian and Spaniſh, though he had learnt ſomething as a ſchool-boy, it had been in a thoughtleſs and careleſs way, and, after the injury to his ſight, both of them had been neglected. The whole, therefore, was not to be relied upon; and moſt young men at the age of four or five and twenty would have been diſheartened at the proſpect of attempting to recover ſo much loſt ground, and to make up for ſo many opportunities that had gone by never to return. When to this is added the peculiar diſcouragement that ſeemed almoſt to ſhut out knowledge by its main entrance, it would have been no matter of

Obſtacles.

reproach to his courage or his manhood, if he had turned away from the undertaking as one beyond his ſtrength.

Reſolution.

But it is evident that he only addreſſed himſelf to his taſk with the more earneſtneſs and reſolution. He began, I think wiſely, with the Engliſh, being willing to go back to the very elements, and on the 30th of October, 1821, made a memorandum that he would undertake "a courſe of ſtudies" involving, —

"1. Principles of grammar, correct writing, &c.;

"2. Compendious hiſtory of North America;

"3. Fine proſe-writers of Engliſh from Roger Aſcham to the preſent day, principally with reference to their mode of writing, — not including hiſtorians, except as far as requiſite for an acquaintance with ſtyle;

"4. Latin claſſics one hour a day."

The American hiſtory he did not immediately touch; but on the reſt he entered at once, and carried out his plan vigorouſly. He ſtudied, as if he had been a ſchool-boy, Blair's Rhetoric, Lindley Murray's Grammar, and the prefatory matter to Johnſon's Dictionary, for the grammatical portion of his taſk; and then he took up the ſeries of good Engliſh writers, beginning with Aſcham, Sir Philip Sidney, Bacon, Browne, Raleigh, and Milton, and coming down to our own times, — not often reading the whole of any one author, but enough of each to obtain, what he more eſpecially ſought, an idea of his ſtyle and general characteriſtics. Occaſionally he noted down his opinion of them, — not always ſuch an opinion as he would have juſtified or entertained later in life, but always ſuch as to ſhow a ſpirit of obſervation and a purpoſe of improvement. Thus, under the date of November, 1821, he ſays: —

Engliſh readings.

"Finiſhed Roger Aſcham's 'Schoolmaſter.' Style vigorous and poliſhed, and even euphonious, conſidering the period; his language often ungrammatical, inelegant, and with the Latin idiom. He was one of the firſt who were bold and wiſe enough to write Engliſh proſe. He diſlikes rhyme, and thinks iambics the proper quantity for Engliſh verſe. Hence blank verſe. He was a critical ſcholar, but too faſtidious.

Roger Aſcham.

"Milton, 'Reaſons of Church Government.' Style vigorous, figurative to conceit; a rich and ſublime imagination; often coarſe, harſh; conſtant uſe of

Milton.

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Latin idiom; inverſion. He is very bold, confident in his own talent, with cloſe, unrelenting argument; upon the whole, giving the reader a higher idea of his ſturdy principle than of his affections."

In this way he continued nearly a year occupying himſelf with the good Engliſh proſe-writers, and, among the reſt, with the great preachers, Taylor, Tillotſon, and Barrow, but not ſtopping until he had come down to Jeffrey and Gifford, whom he marked as the leading critics of our period. But during all this time, he gave his daily hour to the principal Latin claſſics, eſpecially Tacitus, Livy, and Cicero; taking care, as he ſays, to "obſerve their characteriſtic phyſiognomies, — not ſtyle and manner as much as ſentiments, &c."

Having finiſhed this courſe, he turned next to the French, going, as he intimates, "deeper and wider," becauſe his purpoſe was not, as in the Latin, to ſtrengthen his knowledge, but to form an acquaintance with the whole of French literature, properly ſo called. He went back, therefore, as far as Froiſſart, and did not ſtop until he had come down to Chateaubriand. It was a good deal of it read by himſelf in the forenoons, thus ſaving much time; for in 1822–1823, except when occaſional inflammation occurred, his eye was in a condition to do him more ſervice than it had done him for many years, and he huſbanded its reſources ſo patiently, and with ſo much care, that he rarely loſt anything by imprudence.

Studies in French.

But French literature did not ſatisfy him as Engliſh had done. He found it leſs rich, vigorous, and original. He, indeed, enjoyed Montaigne, and admired Paſcal, whom he preferred to Boſſuet or to Fénélon, partly, I think, for the same reaſons that led him to prefer Corneille to Racine. But Lafontaine and Molière ſtood quite by themſelves in his eſtimation, although in ſome reſpects, and eſpecially in the delineation of a particular humor or folly, he placed Ben Jonſon before the great French dramatiſt. The forms of French poetry, and the rigorous ſyſtem of rhymes enforced in its tragedies, were more than commonly diſtaſteful to him.

While, however, he was thus occupied with French litera-

ture as a matter of ſerious ſtudy during parts of 1822 and 1823, he liſtened to a good deal of hiſtory read to him in a miſcellaneous way for his amuſement, and went through a ſomewhat complete courſe of the old Engliſh drama from Heywood to Dryden, accompanying it with the correſponding portions of Auguſt Wilhelm Schlegel's Lectures, which he greatly reliſhed. During the same period, too, we read together, at my houſe, three or four afternoons in each week, the Northern Antiquities, publiſhed by Weber, Jamieſon, and Scott in 1815; a good many of the old national romances in Ritſon and Ellis, "Sir Triſtrem," Percy's "Reliques," and portions of other ſimilar collections, — all relating either to the very earlieſt Engliſh literature or to its connection with the Scandinavian and the Teutonic. It was his firſt adventure in this direction, and he enjoyed it not a little, — the more, perhaps, becauſe he was then going on with the French, in which he took leſs intereſt.

Engliſh drama.

Old Engliſh literature.

In the autumn of 1823, following out the ſame general purpoſe to which he had now devoted two years, he began the Italian. At firſt he only read ſuch books as would ſooneſt make him familiar with the language, and ſo much of Siſmondi's "Littérature du Midi" as would give him an outline of the whole field. Afterwards he took Ginguené and ſometimes Tiraboſchi for his guide, and went over an extraordinary amount of poetry, rather than proſe, from Dante, and even from the "Poeti del Primo Secolo," to Metaſtaſio, Alfieri, and Monti. It ſeems quite ſurpriſing how much he got through with, and it would be almoſt incredible, if his notes on it were not full and deciſive. He wrote, in fact, more upon Italian literature than he had written upon either the Engliſh or the French, and it made apparently a much deeper impreſſion upon him than the laſt. At different times he even thought of devoting a large part of his life to its ſtudy; and, excepting what he has done in relation to Spaniſh hiſtory, nothing of all he has publiſhed is ſo matured and ſatisfactory as two articles in the North American Review; one on Italian Narrative Poetry, publiſhed in October, 1824, and another on Italian Poetry and Romance, publiſhed in July, 1831, both to be noticed hereafter.

Studies in Italian.

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With what ſpirit and in what tone he carried on at this time the ſtudies which produced an effect ſo permanent on his literary taſtes and character will be better ſhown by the following familiar notes than by anything more formal: —

TO MR. TICKNOR.

Tueſday Morning, 8 o'clock, Dec. 15, 1823.

DEAR GEORGE,

I am afraid you will think my ſtudy too much like the lion's den; the footſteps never turn outwards. I want to borrow more books; viz. one volume of ancient Italian poetry; I ſhould like one containing ſpecimens of Cino da Piſtoia, as I ſuſpect he was the beſt verſifier in Petrarch's time; alſo, Ginguené; alſo, ſome tranſlation of Dante.

Petrarch.

I ſpoke very raſhly of Petrarch the other day. I had only read the firſt volume, which, though containing ſome of his beſt, is, on the whole, much leſs moving and powerful than Part II. It is a good way to read him chronologically; that is, to take up each ſonnet and *canzone* in the order, and underſtanding the peculiar circumſtances, in which it was written. Ginguené has pointed out this courſe.

On the whole, I have never read a foreign poet, that poſſeſſed more of the ſpirit of the beſt Engliſh poetry. In two reſpects this is very ſtriking in Petrarch; — the tender paſſion with which he aſſociates every place in the country, the beautiful ſcenery about Avignon, with the recollections of Laura; and, ſecondly, the moral influence which his love for her ſeems to have had upon his character, and which ſhows itſelf in the religious ſentiment that pervades more or leſs all his verſes.

Laura.

How any one could ever doubt her exiſtence who has read Petrarch's poetry, is a matter of aſtoniſhment to me. Setting aſide external evidence, which ſeems to me concluſive enough, his poetry could not have been addreſſed to an imaginary object; and one fact, the particular delight which he takes in the belief that ſhe retains in heaven, and that he ſhall ſee her there, with the ſame countenance, complexion, bodily appearance, &c., that ſhe had on earth, is ſo natural in a real lover, and would be ſo unlikely to preſs itſelf upon a fictitious one, that I think it is worth noticing, as affording ſtrong internal evidence of her ſubſtantial exiſtence. I believe, however, that it is admitted generally now, from facts reſpecting his family brought to light by the Abbé de Sade, a deſcendant of her houſe.

The richneſs and perfection of the Italian in the hands of Petrarch is truly wonderful. After getting over the difficulty of ſome of his myſtical nonſenſe, and reading a *canzone* two or three times, he impreſſes one very much; and the varied meaſures of the *canzone* put the facility and melody of verſe-making to the ſtrongeſt teſt. Gravina ſays, there are not two words in Petrarch's verſes obſolete. Voltaire, I remember, ſays the ſame thing of the "Provincial Letters," written three hundred years later. Where is the work we can put our finger on

in our own tongue before the eighteenth century and then ſay the ſame? Yet from long before Elizabeth's time there were no invaſions or immigrations to new-mould the language.

I hope you are all well under this awful diſpenſation of ſnow. I have ſhovelled a ſtout path this morning, and can report it more than a foot deep. A fine evening for the party at ——, and I dine at ——; ſo I get a morning and a half. Give my condolence to Anna, whom I hope to meet this evening, if the baby is well and we ſhould not be buried alive in the courſe of the day.

Yours affectionately,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

Being alſo ſhut up in the houſe by the ſnow-ſtorm referred to, I anſwered him the ſame day with a long note entering into the queſtion of the real exiſtence of Laura, and the following rejoinder came the next day cloſe upon the heel of my reply.

TO MR. TICKNOR.

Bedford Street, Dec. 17, 1823.

DEAR GEORGE,

I think better of ſnow-ſtorms than I ever did before; ſince, though they keep a man's body in the houſe, they bring his mind out. I ſuppoſe, if it had been fair weather yeſterday, I ſhould not have had your little diſſertation upon Madonna Laura, which intereſted as well as amuſed me. As to the queſtion of the real exiſtence of Madonna, I can have but little to ſay. . . . . One thing ſeems to me clear, that the *onus probandi* is with thoſe who would deny the ſubſtantiality of Laura; becauſe ſhe is addreſſed as a living perſon by Petrarch, and becauſe no contemporary unequivocally ſtates her to have been an ideal one. I ſay unequivocally, becauſe the remark you refer to of one of the Colonna family ſeems to have been rather an intimation or a gratuitous ſuppoſition, which might well come from one who lived at a diſtance from the ſcene of attachment, *amour*, or whatever you call this Platonic paſſion of Petrarch's. The *Idealiſts*, however, to borrow a metaphyſical term, would ſhift this burden of proof upon their adverſaries. On this ground I agree with you, that internal evidence derived from poetry, whoſe eſſence, as you truly ſay, is fiction, is liable to great miſinterpretation. Yet I think that, although a novel or a long poem may be written, addreſſed to, and deſcriptive of ſome imaginary goddeſs, &c. (I take it, there is not much doubt of Beatrice, or of the original of Fiammetta), yet that a long ſeries of ſeparate poems ſhould have been written with great paſſion, under different circumſtances, through a long courſe of years, from the warm period of boyhood to the cool retroſpective ſeaſon of gray hairs, would, I think, be, in the higheſt degree, improbable. But when with this you connect one or two external facts, e. g. the very memorandum, to which you refer, written in his private manuſcript of Virgil, intended only for himſelf, as he expreſſly ſays in it, with ſuch ſolemn, unequivocal language as this: "In order to preſerve the

Madonna Laura.

A real perſon.

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melancholy recollections of this loſs, I find a certain ſatisfaction mingled with my ſorrow in noting this in a volume which often falls under my eye, and which thus tells me there is nothing further to delight me in this life, that my ſtrongeſt tie is broken," &c., &c. Again, in a treatiſe "De Contemptu Mundi," a ſort of confeſſion in which he ſeems to have had a ſober communion with his own heart, as I infer from Ginguené, he ſpeaks of his paſſion for Laura in a very unambiguous manner. Theſe notes or memoranda, intended only for his own eye, would, I think, in any court of juſtice be admitted as poſitive evidence of the truth of what they aſſert. I ſhould be willing to reſt the point at iſſue on theſe two facts.

Opening his poetry, one thing ſtruck me in ſupport of his ſincerity, in ſeeing a ſonnet, which begins with the name of the friend we refer to.

"Rotta e l'alta Colonna e 'l verde Lauro."

Vile puns, but he would hardly have mingled the ſincere elegy of a friend with that of a fictitious creation of his own brain. This, I admit, is not ſafe to build upon, and I do not build upon it. I agree that it may be highly probable that inveſtigators, Italian, French, and Engliſh, have feigned more than they found, — have gone into details, where only a few general facts could be hoped for; but the general baſis, the real exiſtence of ſome woman named Laura, who influenced the heart, the conduct, the intellectual character, of Petrarch, is, I think, not to be reſiſted. And I believe your deciſion does not materially differ from this.

Early Italian poets.

I return the "Poeti del Primo Secolo." Though proſaic, they are ſuperior to what I imagined, and give me a much higher notion of the general ſtate of the Italian tongue at that early period than I had imagined it was entitled to. It is not more obſolete than the French in the time of Marot, or the Engliſh in the time of Spenſer. Petrarch, however, you eaſily ſee, infuſed into it a warmth and richneſs — a ſplendor of poetical idiom — which has been taken up and incorporated with the language of ſucceeding poets. But he is the moſt muſical, moſt melancholy, of all. Siſmondi quotes Malaſpina, a Florentine hiſtorian, as writing in 1280, with all the purity and elegance of modern Tuſcan. But I think you muſt ſay, *Sat prata biberunt*. I have poured forth enough, I think, conſidering how little I know of the controverſy.

I have got a long morning again, as I dine late. So if you will let me have "Cary,"[8] I think it may aſſiſt me in ſome very knotty paſſages, though I am afraid it is too fine [print] to read much.

Give my love to Anna, who, I hope, is none the worſe for laſt night's frolicking.

Yours affectionately,

W. H. PRESCOTT.

He ſoon finiſhed Dante, and of the effect produced on him by that marvellous genius, at once ſo coloſſal and ſo gentle, the

[8] Tranſlation of Dante.

following note will give ſome idea. It ſhould be added, that the impreſſion thus made was never loſt. He never ceaſed to talk of Dante in the ſame tone of admiration in which he thus broke forth on the firſt ſtudy of him, — a noteworthy circumſtance, becauſe, owing to the imperfect viſion that ſo crippled and curtailed his ſtudies, he was never afterwards able to refreſh his firſt impreſſions, except, as he did it from time to time, by reading a few favorite paſſages, or liſtening to them.[9]

TO MR. TICKNOR.

Jan. 21, 1824.

Dear George,

I ſhall be obliged to you if you will let me have the "Arcadia" of Sannazaro, the "Paſtor Fido," and the "Aminta," — together with the volumes of Ginguené, containing the criticiſm of theſe poems.

I have finiſhed the Paradiſo of Dante, and feel as if I had made a moſt important addition to the ſmall ſtore of my acquiſitions. To have read the Inferno, is not to have read Dante; his genius ſhows itſelf under ſo very different an aſpect in each of his three poems. The Inferno will always be the moſt popular, becauſe it is the moſt — indeed the only one that is at all — entertaining. Human nature is ſo delightfully conſtituted, that it can never derive half the pleaſure from any relation of happineſs that it does from one of miſery and extreme ſuffering. Then there is a great deal of narrative, of action, in the Inferno, and very little in the two other parts. Notwithſtanding all this, I think the impreſſion produced on the mind of the reader by the two latter portions of the work much the moſt pleaſing. You impute a finer, a more exquiſite (I do not mean a more powerful), intellectual character to the poet, and, to my notion, a character more deeply touched with a true poetical feeling.

Dante.

The Inferno.

The Inferno conſiſts of a ſeries of pictures of the moſt ingenious, the moſt acute, and ſometimes the moſt diſguſting bodily ſufferings. I could wiſh that Dante had made more uſe of the *mind* as a ſource and a means of anguiſh. Once he has done it with beautiful effect, in the deſcription of a *Barattiere*, I believe,[10] who compares his miſerable ſtate in hell with his pleaſant reſidence on the banks of the Arno, and draws additional anguiſh from the compariſon. In general, the ſufferings he inflicts are of a purely phyſical nature. His devils

9 We, however, both liſtened to the reading of Dante, by an accompliſhed Italian, a few months later; but this I conſider little more than a part of the ſame ſtudy of the *altiſſimo poeta*.

10 My friend ſays, with ſome heſitation, "a Barattiere, *I believe*." It was in fact a "Falſificatore," — *a counterfeiter*, — and not a *barrator* or *peculator*. The barrators are found in the twenty-firſt canto of the Inferno; but the beautiful paſſage here alluded to is in the thirtieth.

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and bad ſpirits, with one or two exceptions, which I remember you pointed out, are much inferior in moral grandeur to Milton's. How inferior that ſtupendous overgrown Satan of his to the ſublime ſpirit of Milton, not yet ſtript of all its original brightneſs. I muſt ſay that I turn with more delight to the faultleſs tale of Franceſca da Polenta, than to that of Ugolino, or any other in the poem. Perhaps it is in part from its being in ſuch a dark ſetting, that it ſeems ſo exquiſite, by contraſt. The long talks in the Purgatorio and the diſmal diſputations in the Paradiſo certainly lie very heavy on theſe parts of the work; but then this very inaction brings out ſome of the moſt conſpicuous beauties in Dante's compoſition.

The Purgatorio.

In the Purgatorio, we have, in the firſt ten cantos, the moſt delicious deſcriptions of natural ſcenery, and we feel like one who has eſcaped from a dungeon into a rich and beautiful country. In the latter portions of it he often indulges in a noble tone of moral reflection. I look upon the Purgatorio, full of ſober meditation and ſweet deſcription, as more *à l'Anglaiſe* than any other part of the Commedia. In the Paradiſo his ſhocking argumentations are now and then enlivened by the pepper and ſalt of his political indignation, but at firſt they both diſcouraged and diſguſted me, and I thought I ſhould make quick work of the buſineſs. But upon reading further, — thinking more of it, — I could not help admiring the genius which he has ſhown in bearing up under ſo oppreſſive a ſubject. It is ſo much eaſier to deſcribe gradations of pain than of pleaſure, — but more eſpecially when this pleaſure muſt be of a purely intellectual nature. It is like a painter ſitting down to paint the ſoul. The Scriptures have not done it ſucceſsfully. They paint the phyſical tortures of hell, fire, brimſtone, &c., but in heaven the only joys, i. e. animal joys, are ſinging and dancing, which to few people convey a notion of high delight, and to many are poſitively diſagreeable.

Let any one conſider how difficult, nay impoſſible, it is to give an entertaining picture of purely intellectual delight. The two higheſt kinds of pure *ſpiritual* gratification which, I take it, a man can feel, — at leaſt, I eſteem it ſo, — are that ariſing from the conſciouſneſs of a reciprocated paſſion (I ſpeak as a lover), and, ſecond, one of a much more philoſophic caſt, that ariſing from the ſucceſsful exertion of his own underſtanding (as in compoſition, for inſtance). Now

The Paradiſo.

Dante's pleaſures in the Paradiſo are derived from these ſources. Not that he pretends to write books there, but then he diſputes like a doctor upon his own ſtudies, — ſubjects moſt intereſting to him, but unfortunately to nobody elſe. It is comical to ſee how much he plumes himſelf upon his ſucceſsful polemical diſcuſſions with St. John, Peter, &c., and how he makes thoſe good ſaints praiſe and flatter him.

Beatrice.

As to his paſſion for Beatrice, I think there is all the internal evidence of its being a genuine paſſion, though her early death, and probably his much muſing upon her, exaggerated her good qualities into a ſort of myſtical perſonification of his own, very unlike the original. His drinking in all his celeſtial intelligence from her eyes, though rather a myſtical ſentimentaliſm, is the moſt glorious tribute that ever was paid to woman. It is lucky, on the whole, that ſhe died when ſhe was young, as, had ſhe lived to marry him, he

would very likely have picked a quarrel with her, and his Divine Comedy have loſt a great ſource of its inſpiration.

In all this, however, there was a great want of action, and Dante was forced, as in the Purgatorio, to give vent to his magnificent imagination in other ways. He has, therefore, made uſe of all the meagre hints ſuggeſted metaphorically by the Scriptures, and we have the three ingredients, light, muſic, and dancing, in every poſſible and impoſſible degree and diverſity. The Inferno is a ſort of tragedy, full of action and of characters, all well preſerved. The Paradiſo is a great melodrama, where little is ſaid, but the chief ſkill is beſtowed upon the machinery, — the getting up, — and, certainly, there never was ſuch a getting up, anywhere. Every canto blazes with a new and increaſed effulgence. The very reading of it by another pained my poor eyes. And yet, you never become tired with theſe gorgeous illuſtrations, — it is the deſcriptions that fatigue. The Divina Commedia as a whole.

Another beauty, in which he indulges more freely in the laſt than in the other parts, is his unrivalled ſimiles. I ſhould think you might glean from the Paradiſo at leaſt one hundred all new and appropriate, fitting, as he ſays, "like a ring to a finger," and moſt beautiful. Where are there any compariſons ſo beautiful? Its ſimiles.

I muſt ſay I was diſappointed with the laſt canto; but then, as the Iriſhman ſaid, I expected to be. For what mortal mind could give a portrait of the Deity. The moſt conſpicuous quality in Dante, to my notion, is ſimplicity. In this I think him ſuperior to any work I ever read, unleſs it be ſome parts of the Scriptures. Homer's alluſions, as far as I recollect, are not taken from as ſimple and familiar, yet not vulgar, objects, as are Dante's, — from the moſt common intimate relations of domeſtic life, for inſtance, to which Dante often with great ſweetneſs and nature alludes. Laſt canto.

I think it was a fortunate thing for the world, that the firſt poem in modern times was founded on a ſubject growing out of the Chriſtian religion, or more properly on that religion itſelf, and that it was written by a man deeply penetrated with the ſpirit of its ſterneſt creed. The religion indeed would have had its influence ſooner or later upon literature. But then a work like Dante's, ſhowing ſo early the whole extent of its powers, muſt have had an incalculable influence over the intellectual world, — an influence upon literature almoſt as remarkable as that exerted by the revelation of Chriſtianity upon the moral world. A Chriſtian poem.

As to Cary, I think Dante would have given him a place in his ninth heaven, if he could have foreſeen his Tranſlation. It is moſt aſtoniſhing, giving not only the literal correſponding phraſe, but the ſpirit of the original, the true Danteſque manner. It ſhould be cited as an evidence of the compactneſs, the pliability, the ſweetneſs, of the Engliſh tongue. It particularly ſhows the wealth of the *old vocabulary*, — it is from this that he has ſelected his rich ſtock of expreſſions. It is a triumph of our mother tongue that it has given every idea of the moſt condenſed original in the Italian tongue in a ſmaller compaſs in this tranſlation, — his cantos, as you have no doubt noticed, are five or ſix lines ſhorter generally than Dante's. One defect he has. He does not, indeed he could not, render the naïve terms of his original. This is often noticeable, but it is the defect of our language, or rather of our uſe of it. One fault he has, one that runs through his whole tranſlation, and makes it tedious; viz. a too Cary's Tranſlation.

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close assimilation to, or rather adoption of, the Italian idiom. This leads him often to take liberties not allowable in English, — to be ungrammatical, and so elliptical as to be quite unintelligible.

Now I have done, and if you ask me what I have been doing all this for, or, if I chose to write it, why I did not put it in my Commonplace, I answer, — 1st. That when I began this epistle, I had no idea of being so *lengthy* (as we say); 2d. That, in all pursuits, it is a great delight to find a friend to communicate one's meditations and conclusions to, and that you are the only friend I know in this bustling, money-getting world, who takes an interest in my peculiar pursuits, as well as in myself. So, for this cause, I pour into your unhappy ear what would else have been decently locked up in my *escritoire*.

I return you Petrarca, Tasso, Ginguené, Vols. I. – IV., and shall be obliged to you, in addition to the books first specified, for any translation, &c., if you have any of those books; also for an edition — if you have such — of the Canterbury Tales, Vol. I., that contains a glossary at the bottom of each page below the text; Tyrrwhitt's being a dictionary.

Give my love to Anna, and believe me, dear George, now and ever,

Yours affectionately,

W. H. PRESCOTT.

Pursuing the Italian in this earnest way for about a year, he found that his main purposes in relation to it were accomplished, and he would gladly, at once, have begun the German, of which he knew nothing at all, but which, for a considerable period, he had deemed more important to the general scholarship at which he then aimed than any other modern language, and certainly more important than any one of which he did not already feel himself sufficiently master. "I am now," he recorded, two years earlier, in the spring of 1822, "twenty-six years of age nearly. By the time I am thirty, God willing, I propose, with what stock I have already on hand, to be a very well read English scholar; to be acquainted with the classical and useful authors, prose and poetry, in Latin, French, and Italian, and especially in history; I do not mean a critical or profound acquaintance. The two following years I may hope to learn German, and to have read the classical German writers; and the translations, if my eye continues weak, of the Greek. And this is enough," he adds quietly, "for general discipline."

Proposes to study German.

But the German, as he well knew, was much less easy of

acquiſition than any of the modern languages to which he had thus far devoted himſelf, and its literature much more unmanageable, if not more abundant. He was, however, unwilling to abandon it, as it afforded ſo many important facilities for the purſuits to which he intended to give his life. But the infirmity of his ſight decided this, as it had already decided, and was deſtined later to decide, ſo many other queſtions in which he was deeply intereſted. After much deliberation, therefore, he gave up the German, as a thing either beyond his reach, or demanding more time for its acquiſition than he could reaſonably give to it. It ſeemed, in fact, all but an impoſſibility to learn it thoroughly; the only way in which he cared to learn anything.

Gives up German.

At the outſet he was much diſcouraged by the concluſion to which he had thus come. The acquiſition of the German was, in fact, the firſt obſtacle to his ſettled literary courſe which his patience and courage had not been able to ſurmount, and for a time he became, from this circumſtance, leſs exact and methodical in his ſtudies than he had previouſly been. He recorded late in the autumn of 1824: "I have read with no method and very little diligence or ſpirit for three months." This he found an unſatisfactory ſtate of things. He talked with me much about it, and ſeemed, during nearly a year, more unſettled as to his future courſe, ſo far as I can now recollect, than he had ever ſeemed to me earlier; certainly, more than he ever ſeemed to me afterwards. Indeed, he was quite unhappy about it.

CHAPTER VI.

1824 – 1828.

He ſtudies Spaniſh inſtead of German. — Firſt Attempts not earneſt. — Mably's "Étude de l'Hiſtoire." — Thinks of writing Hiſtory. — Different Subjects ſuggeſted. — Ferdinand and Iſabella. — Doubts long. — Writes to Mr. A. H. Everett. — Delay from Suffering in the Eye. — Orders Books from Spain. — Plan of Study. — Heſitates from the Condition of his Sight. — Determines to go on. — His Reader, Mr. Engliſh. — Proceſs of Work. — Eſtimates and Plans.

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Firſt thoughts of Spaniſh.

AN accident — as is ſometimes the caſe in the life of even the moſt earneſt and conſiſtent men — had now an influence on him not at all anticipated by either of us at the time, and one which, if it ultimately proved a guiding impulſe, became ſuch rather from the force of his own character than through any movement imparted to him from without.

I had, at this period, been almoſt excluſively occupied for two or three years with Spaniſh literature, and had completed a courſe of lectures on Spaniſh literary hiſtory, which I had delivered to the higheſt claſs in Harvard College, and which became, many years afterwards, the baſis of a work on that ſubject. Thinking ſimply to amuſe and occupy my friend at a time when he ſeemed much to need it, I propoſed to read him theſe lectures in the autumn of 1824. For this purpoſe he came to my houſe in the early part of a ſucceſſion of even-

ings, until the whole was completed; and in November he determined, as a ſubſtitute for the German, to undertake the Spaniſh, which had not previouſly conſtituted any part of his plan of ſtudy.[1]

Determines to ſtudy Spaniſh.

He made his arrangements for it at once, and we prepared together a liſt of books that he ſhould read. It was a great and unexpected pleaſure to me to find him launched on a courſe of ſtudy in which I had long been intereſted, and I certainly encouraged him in it as much as I could without being too ſelfiſh.

Soon after this, however, I left home with my family, and was abſent during the greater part of the winter. My houſe was, of courſe, ſhut up, except that ſervants were left in charge of it; but it had been underſtood between us, that, as he had no Spaniſh books of his own, he ſhould carry on his Spaniſh ſtudies from the reſources he would find in my library. On the 1ſt of December he began a regular drill in the language, with a teacher, and on the ſame day, by way of announcing it, wrote to me: —

Begins to work.

"Your manſion looks gloomy enough, I promiſe you, and as I paſs it ſometimes in the evening, with no cheerful light within to relieve it, it frowns doubly diſmal on me. As to the interior, I have not ſet my foot within its precincts ſince your departure, which, you will think, does not augur well for the Spaniſh. I propoſe, however, intruding upon the ſilence of the illuſtrious dead, the latter part of this week, in order to carry off the immortal remains of Don Antonio de Solis, whom you, dear George, recommended me to begin with."

This was the opening of the Spaniſh campaign, which ended only with his life; and it is worth noting that he was already more than twenty-eight years old. A few days afterwards he writes: "I ſnatch a fraction of the morning from the intereſting treatiſe of Monsieur Joſſé on the Spaniſh language,[2] and from the 'Conquiſta de Mexico,' which, notwithſtanding the time I have been upon it, I am far from having con-

Solis.

[1] He ſpeaks of this in February, 1841, writing to Don Paſcual de Gayangos, one of our mutual Spaniſh friends; when, referring back to the year 1824, he ſays, "I heard Mr. Ticknor's lectures then with great pleaſure."

[2] Joſſé, Elémens de la Grammaire de la Langue Eſpagnole.

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quered."[3] But he ſoon became earneſt in his work. On the 24th of January, 1825, he wrote to me again: —

Progreſs in Spaniſh ſtudies.

"I have been much bent upon Spaniſh the laſt month, and have uncourteouſly reſiſted all invitations . . . . . to break in upon my courſe of reading. I begin to feel my way perceptibly in it now. Did you never, in learning a language, after groping about in the dark for a long while, ſuddenly ſeem to turn an angle, where the light breaks upon you all at once? The knack ſeems to have come to me within the laſt fortnight, in the ſame manner as the art of ſwimming comes to thoſe who have been ſplaſhing about for months in the water in vain. . . . . Will you have the goodneſs to inform me in your next, where I can find ſome ſimple treatiſe on Spaniſh verſification, — alſo in which part of your library is the 'Amadis de Gaula.'[4] For I preſume, as Cervantes ſpared it from the bonfire, you have it among your treaſures. I have been accompanying my courſe with Siſmondi and Bouterwek, and I have been led more than once to reflect upon the injuſtice you are doing to yourſelf in ſecluding your own manuſcript Lectures from the world. Neither of theſe writers has gone into the ſubject as thoroughly as you have," &c., &c.[5]

Spaniſh notes.

On coming back after my abſence, he began to write me notes in Spaniſh, borrowing or returning books, and ſometimes giving his opinion about thoſe he ſent home. His ſtyle was not, indeed, of the pureſt Caſtilian, but it was marked with a clearneſs and idiomatic vigor which not a little ſurpriſed me. Three of theſe notes, which he wrote in March and April, 1825, ſtill ſurvive to give proof of his great induſtry and ſucceſs; and one of them is curious for opinions about Solis, more ſevere than he afterwards entertained when he came to ſtudy that hiſtorian's work on the Conqueſt of Mexico as a part of the materials for his own.[6]

[3] In the early part of his Spaniſh ſtudies, as he here intimates, he was not much intereſted. At Chriſtmas, 1824, he wrote to his friend Mr. Bancroft: "I am battling with the Spaniards this winter, but I have not the heart for it that I had for the Italians. I doubt whether there are many valuable things that the key of knowledge will unlock in that language"; — an amuſing prediction, when we conſider what followed.

[4] He remembered, no doubt, the boyiſh pleaſure he had found in reading Southey's *rifacimento* of it. See *ante*, p. 10.

[5] This, with much more like it in the preſent letter and in other letters, which I do not cite, was founded in a miſtake, made by his kindneſs for me. The Lectures were far from being what he ſuppoſed them to be. They needed to be entirely recaſt, before they could be preſented to the public with any decent claims to thoroughneſs. In fact, "The History of Spaniſh Literature" did not appear until a long time afterwards, and then it bore very few traces of its academic origin.

[6] On another occaſion, making ſome remarks about Ercilla's "Araucana," he ſays,

But, during the ſummer of 1825, his reading was very miſcellaneous, and, excepting "Doblado's Letters on Spain," by Blanco White, no part of it, I think, was connected with his ſtrictly Spaniſh ſtudies. In the autumn, however, becoming much diſſatisfied with this unſettled and irregular ſort of life, he began to look round for a ſubject to which he could give continuous thought and labor. On the 16th of October he recorded: "I have been ſo heſitating and reflecting upon what I ſhall do, that I have, in fact, done nothing." And October 30th: "I have paſſed the laſt fortnight in examination of a ſuitable ſubject for hiſtorical compoſition.[7] It is well to determine with caution and accurate inſpection."

At firſt his thoughts were turned towards American hiſtory, on which he had beſtowed a good deal of rather idle time during the preceding months, and to which he now gave more.[8] But Spaniſh literature began, unexpectedly to him, to have ſtronger attractions. He read, or rather liſtened to, the whole of Mariana's beautiful hiſtory, giving careful attention to ſome parts of it, and paſſing lightly over the reſt. And in connection with this, as his mind became more directed to ſuch ſubjects, he liſtened with great intereſt to Mably's "Étude de l'Hiſtoire," — a work which had much influence in giving

Mably's Étude de l'Hiſtoire.

in the ſame ſpirit, "Both Solis and Ercilla diſguſt the temperate reader by the little value they ſet upon the ſufferings of the heathen." In this view of the matter I heartily concur with him.

7 As early as 1820, I find that he had been greatly impreſſed by reading Gibbon's Autobiography with Lord Sheffield's additions, — a book which he always regarded with peculiar intereſt, and which doubtleſs had its influence in originally determining him to venture on hiſtorical compoſition. In one of his letters written in 1845, he ſays, he finds memoranda of a tendency to hiſtorical ſtudies as early as 1819.

8 Two or three years earlier than this date — probably in 1822 — I find the following among his private memoranda: — "Hiſtory has always been a favorite ſtudy with me; and I have long looked forward to it, as a ſubject on which I was one day to exerciſe my pen. It is not raſh, in the dearth of well-written American hiſtory, to entertain the hope of throwing light upon this matter. This is my hope. But it requires time, and a long time, before the mind can be prepared for this department of writing." He took time, as we ſhall ſee, for it was ſeven years, at leaſt, after this paſſage was written, before he began the compoſition of his Ferdinand and Iſabella. "I think," he ſays, "thirty-five years of age full ſoon enough to put pen to paper." As it turned out, he began in earneſt a little before he had reached thirty-four.

CHAP. VI. 1825. ÆT. 29.

its final direction to his life, and which he always valued both for its acuteneſs and for its power of ſetting the reader to think for himſelf. The reſult was that, at Chriſtmas, after no little reflection and anxiety, he made the following memorandum: —

"I have been heſitating between two topics for hiſtorical inveſtigation, — Spaniſh hiſtory from the invaſion of the Arabs to the conſolidation of the monarchy under Charles V., or a hiſtory of the revolution of ancient Rome, which converted the republic into a monarchy. A third ſubject which invites me is a biographical ſketch of eminent geniuſes, with criticiſms on their productions and on the character of their times. I ſhall probably ſelect the firſt, as leſs difficult of execution than the ſecond, and as more novel and entertaining than the laſt. But I muſt diſcipline my idle fancy, or my meditations will be little better than dreams. I have devoted more than four hours *per diem* to thinking or dreaming on theſe ſubjects."

Spaniſh hiſtory.

But this delay was no matter of ſerious regret to him. He always deliberated long before he undertook anything of conſequence, and, in regard to his examination of this very matter, he had already recorded: "I care not how long a time I take for it, provided I am diligent in all that time."

He was a little diſtracted, however, at this period, by the thought of writing ſomething like a hiſtory or general examination of Italian literature. As we have noticed, he had in 1823 been much occupied with the principal Italian authors, and had found the ſtudy more intereſting than any he had previouſly purſued in modern literature. A little later — that is, in the autumn of 1824 and the ſpring of 1825 — an accompliſhed Italian exile was in Boſton, and, partly to give him occupation, and partly for the pleaſure and improvement to be obtained from it, I invited the unfortunate ſcholar to come three or four times a week, and read aloud to me from the principal poets of his country. Preſcott joined me in it regularly, and ſometimes we had one or two friends with us. In this way we went over large portions of the "Divina Commedia," and the whole of the "Geruſalemme Liberata," parts of Arioſto's "Orlando Furioſo," and ſeveral plays of Alfieri. The ſittings were very agreeable, ſometimes protracted to two or three

Readings of Dante, Taſſo, &c.

hours, and we not only had earneſt and amuſing, if not always very profitable, diſcuſſions about what we heard, but ſometimes we followed them up afterwards with careful inquiries. The pleaſure of the meetings, however, was their great attraction. The Italian ſcholar read well, and we enjoyed it very much. In conſequence of this, Preſcott now turned again to his Italian ſtudies, and made the following record: —

"I have decided to abandon the Roman ſubject. A work on the revolutions of Italian literature has invited my conſideration this week, — a work which, without giving a chronological and minute analyſis of authors, ſhould exhibit in maſſes the moſt important periods, revolutions, and characters in the hiſtory of Italian letters. The ſubject would admit of contraction or expanſion *ad libitum*; and I ſhould be ſpared — what I deteſt — hunting up latent, barren antiquities." Italian ſubject.

The laſt remark is noteworthy, becauſe it is one of the many inſtances in which, after ſevere conſideration, he ſchooled himſelf to do well and thoroughly what he much diſliked to do, and what was in itſelf difficult.

But on the ſame occaſion he wrote further: —

"The ſubject would require a maſs of [general] knowledge and a critical knowledge of the Italian in particular. It would not be new, after the production of Siſmondi and the abundant notices in modern Reviews. Literary hiſtory is not ſo amuſing as civil. Cannot I contrive to embrace the *giſt* of the Spaniſh ſubject, without involving myſelf in the unwieldy, barbarous records of a thouſand years? What new and intereſting topics may be admitted — not forced — into the reigns of Ferdinand and Iſabella? Can I not indulge in a retroſpective picture of the Conſtitutions of Caſtile and Aragon, — of the Mooriſh dynaſties, and the cauſes of their decay and diſſolution? Then I have the Inquiſition, with its bloody perſecutions; the Conqueſt of Granada, — a brilliant paſſage; the exploits of the Great Captain in Italy, — a proper character for romance as well as hiſtory; the diſcovery of a new world, my own country; the new policy of the monarchs towards the overgrown ariſtocracy, &c., &c. A Biography will make me reſponſible for a limited ſpace only; will require much leſs reading (a great conſideration with me); will offer the deeper intereſt which always attaches to minute developments of character, and a continuous, cloſely connected narrative. The ſubject brings me to the point whence [modern] Engliſh hiſtory has ſtarted, is untried ground, and in my opinion a rich one. The age of Ferdinand is moſt important, as containing the germs of the modern ſyſtem of European politics; and the three ſovereigns, Henry VII., Louis XI., and Ferdinand, were important engines in overturning the old ſyſtem. It is in every reſpect an intereſting and momentous period of hiſtory; the materials authentic, ample. I will chew upon this matter, and decide this week." Spaniſh ſubject.

In May, 1847, above twenty years afterwards, he noted in pencil on this paſſage, "This was the firſt germ of my conception of Ferdinand and Iſabella."

Ferdinand and Iſabella.

But he did not, as he hoped he ſhould, decide in a week, although, having advanced well towards a deciſion, he ſoon began to act as if it were already made. On the 15th of January, 1826, when the week had expired, he recorded: —

"Still doubting, looked through Hita's 'Guerras de Granada,' Vol. I. The Italian ſubject has ſome advantages over the Spaniſh. It will ſave me at leaſt one year's introductory labor. It is in the regular courſe of my ſtudies, and I am comparatively at home in literary hiſtory, particularly the Italian. This ſubject has not only exerciſed my ſtudies, but my meditations, ſo that I may fairly eſtimate my ſtarting ground at one year. Then I have tried this topic in public journals, and know the meaſure of my own ſtrength in relation to it. I am quite doubtful of my capacity for doing juſtice to the other ſubject. I have never exerciſed my mind upon ſimilar matters, and I have ſtored it with no materials for compariſon. How can I pronounce upon the defects or virtues of the Spaniſh conſtitutions, when I am hardly acquainted with thoſe of other nations? How can I eſtimate the conſequences, moral, political, &c., of laws and inſtitutions, when I have, in all my life, ſcarcely ever looked the ſubject in the face, or even read the moſt elementary treatiſe upon it? But will not a year's labor, judiciouſly directed, put me on another footing?"

Anxieties about his ſubject.

After ſome further diſcuſſion in the nature of a ſoliloquy, he adds: —

"I believe the Spaniſh ſubject will be more new than the Italian; more intereſting to the majority of readers; more uſeful to me by opening another and more practical department of ſtudy; and not more laborious in relation to authorities to be conſulted, and not more difficult to be diſcuſſed with the lights already afforded me by judicious treatiſes on the moſt intricate parts of the ſubject, and with the allowance of the introductory year for my novitiate in a new walk of letters. The advantages of the Spaniſh topic, on the whole, overbalance the inconvenience of the requiſite preliminary year. For theſe reaſons, I ſubſcribe to the Hiſtory of the Reign of Ferdinand and Iſabella, January 19th, 1826."

Takes the Spaniſh ſubject.

And then follows in pencil, — "A fortunate choice, May, 1847."

He therefore began in earneſt, and, on the 22d of January, prepared a liſt of books ſuch as he ſhould require, and wrote a long letter to Mr. Alexander H. Everett, then our Miniſter at Madrid, an accompliſhed ſcholar himſelf, and one who was

always interested in whatever regarded the cause of letters. They had already been in correspondence on the subject, and Mr. Everett had naturally advised his younger friend to come to Spain, and make for himself the collections he needed, at the same time offering to serve him in any way he could.

Letter to A. H. Everett.

"I entirely agree with you," Prescott replied, "that it would be highly advantageous for me to visit Spain, and to dive into the arcana of those libraries, which, you say, contain such ample stores of history, and I assure you, that, as I am situated, no consideration of domestic ease would detain me a moment from an expedition, which, after all, would not consume more than four or five months. But the state of my eyes, or rather eye, — for I have the use of only one half of this valuable apparatus, — precludes the possibility of it. During the last year this *one* has been sadly plagued with what the physicians are pleased to call a rheumatic inflammation, for which I am now under treatment. . . . . I have always found travelling, with its necessary exposures, to be of infinite disservice to my eyes, and in this state of them particularly I dare not risk it.

"You will ask, with these disadvantages, how I can expect to succeed in my enterprise. I answer, that I hope always to have a partial use of my eyes, and, for the rest, an intelligent reader, who is well acquainted with French, Spanish, and Latin, will enable me to effect with my ears what other people do with their eyes. The only material inconvenience will be a necessarily more tedious and prolonged labor. Johnson says, in his Life of Milton, that no man can compile a history who is blind. But although I should lose the use of my vision altogether (an evil not in the least degree probable), by the blessing of God, if my ears are spared me, I will disprove the assertion, and my chronicle, whatever other demerits it may have, shall not be wanting in accuracy and research.[9] If my health continues thus, I shall necessarily be debarred from many of the convivial, not to say social pleasures of life, and consequently must look to literary pursuits as the principal and permanent source of future enjoyment. As with these views I have deliberately taken up this project, and my progress, since I have begun to break ground, entirely satisfies me of the feasibility of the undertaking, you will not wonder that I should be extremely solicitous to bring within my control an ample quantity of original materials, such as will enable me to achieve my design, and such as will encourage me to pursue it with steady diligence, without fear of competition from any quarter."

Difficult for him to write history.

Thinks he can do it.

9 "To compile a history from various authors, when they can only be consulted by others' eyes, is not easy, nor possible, without more skilful and attentive help than can be commonly obtained; and it was probably the difficulty of consulting and comparing, that stopped Milton's narrative at the Conquest, — a period at which affairs were not very intricate, nor authors very numerous."—Johnson's Works, (London, 1816,) Vol. IX. p. 115. "This remark of the great critic," says Prescott in a note to the Preface of Ferdinand and Isabella, (1837,) where it is cited, — "This remark, which first engaged my attention in the midst of my embarrassments, although discouraging at first, in the end stimulated my desire to overcome them." *Nitor in adversum* might have been his motto.

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New troubles in his eye.

But his courage and patience were put to a new and ſevere trial, before he could even place his foot upon the threſhold of the great undertaking whoſe difficulties he eſtimated ſo juſtly. A dozen years later, in May, 1838, when the Ferdinand and Iſabella was already publiſhed, he made a memorandum in pencil on the letter juſt cited: "This very letter occaſioned the injury to the nerve from which I have never ſince recovered." Preciſely what this injury may have been, I do not know. He calls it at firſt "a ſtiffneſs of the right eye," as if it were a recurrence there of the rheumatiſm which was always more or leſs in ſome part of his perſon; but a few months afterwards he ſpeaks of it as "a new diſorder." It was, I apprehend, only the reſult of an effort too great for the enfeebled organ, and, whenever any conſiderable ſimilar exertion during the reſt of his life was required from it, he uſed to deſcribe the ſenſation he experienced as "a ſtrain of the nerve." It was, no doubt, ſomething of the ſort on this occaſion, and he felt for a time much diſcouraged by it.

Diſcouragements.

The letter which it had coſt him ſo much to write, becauſe he thought it neceſſary to do it with uncommon care, was left in his portfolio to wait the reſult of this freſh and unexpected attack on the poor reſources of his ſight. It was a painful interval. Severe remedies were uſed. The cuppings then made on his temples left marks that he carried to his grave. But in his darkened room, where I conſtantly ſaw him, and ſometimes read to him, his ſpirits never failed. He bated "no jot of heart or hope."

At laſt, after above four weary months, which he paſſed almoſt always in a dark room, and during which he made no record, I find an entry among his memoranda dated "June 4, 1826. A melancholy gap," he ſays, "occaſioned by this new diſorder in the eye. It has, however, ſo much abated this ſummer, that I have ſent my orders to Madrid. I truſt I may yet be permitted to go on with my original plan. What I can't read may be read to me. I will ſecure what I can of the foreign tongues, and leave the Engliſh to my ſecretary. When I can't get ſix,

get four hours per day. I must not waste time in going too deeply or widely into my subject; or, rather, I must confine myself to what exclusively and directly concerns it. I must abjure manuscript and fine print. I must make memoranda accurate and brief of every book I read for this object. Travelling at this lame gait, I may yet hope in five or six years to reach the goal." In this, however, he was mistaken. It proved to be twice as much.

As soon as the order for books was despatched, he made his plan of work. It was as ample and bold as if nothing had occurred to check his hopes.

Plan of study.

"My general course of study," he says, "must be as follows. 1. General Laws, &c. of Nations. 2. History and Constitution of England. 3. History and Government of other European Nations, — France, Italy to 1550, Germany, Portugal. Under the last two divisions, I am particularly to attend to the period intervening between 1400 and 1550. 4. General History of Spain, — its Geography, its Civil, Ecclesiastical, Statistical Concerns; particularly from 1400 to 1550. 5. Ferdinand's Reign *en gros*. 6. Whatever concerns such portions of my subject as I am immediately to treat of. The general division of it I will arrange when I have gone through the first five departments.

"This order of study I shall pursue, as far as my eyes will allow. When they are too feeble to be used, I must have English writers read to me, and then I will select such works as have the nearest relation to the department of study which I may be investigating."

List of books.

Immediately after this general statement of his plan follows a list of several hundred volumes to be read or consulted, which would have been enough, one would think, to alarm the stoutest heart, and severely tax the best eyes. This, indeed, he sometimes felt to be the case. Circumstances seemed occasionally to be stronger than his strong will. He tried, for instance, soon after making the last record, to read a little, and went, at the most moderate rate, through half a volume of Montesquieu's "Ésprit des Lois," which was to be one of the first stepping-stones to his great fabric. But the trouble in his sight was so seriously aggravated by even this experiment, very cautiously made, that he recorded it as "a warning to desist from all further use of his eye for the present, if not for ever." In fact, for three months and more he did not venture to open a book.

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Heſitation.

At the end of that time he began to doubt whether, during the period in which it now ſeemed all but certain that he could have no uſe of his eye, and muſt often be ſhut up in a darkened room, he had not better, without giving up his main purpoſe, undertake ſome other work more manageable than one that involved the uſe of books in ſeveral foreign languages. On the 1ſt of October, therefore, he records, evidently with great regret: —

"As it may probably be ſome years before I ſhall be able to use my own eyes in ſtudy, or even find a ſuitable perſon to read foreign languages to me, I have determined to poſtpone my Spaniſh ſubject, and to occupy myſelf with an Hiſtorical Survey of Engliſh Literature. The ſubject has never been diſcuſſed as a whole, and therefore would be ſomewhat new, and, if well conducted, popular. But the great argument with me is, that, while it is a ſubject with which my previous ſtudies have made me tolerably acquainted and have furniſhed me with abundance of analogies in foreign literatures, it is one which I may inveſtigate nearly as well with my ears as with my eyes, and it will not be difficult to find good readers in the Engliſh, though extremely difficult in any foreign language. *Fauſtum ſit.*"

Final reſolution.

A month, however, was ſufficient to ſatisfy him that this was a miſtake, and that the time which, with his ultimate purpoſe of writing a large work on Spaniſh hiſtory, he could afford to give to this intercalary project, could do little with a ſubject ſo broad as Engliſh literature. After looking through Warton's fragment and Turner's Anglo-Saxons, he therefore writes, November 5th, 1826: —

"I have again, and I truſt finally, determined to proſecute my former ſubject, the Reign of Ferdinand and Iſabella. In taking a more accurate ſurvey of my projected Engliſh Literary Hiſtory, I am convinced it will take at leaſt five years to do anything at all ſatisfactory to myſelf, and I cannot be content to be ſo long detained from a favorite ſubject, and one for which I ſhall have ſuch rare and valuable materials in my own poſſeſſion. But what chiefly influences me is the proſpect of obtaining ſome one, in the ſpace of a year, who, by a competent knowledge of foreign languages, will enable me to purſue my original deſign with nearly as great facility as I ſhould poſſeſs for the inveſtigation of Engliſh literature. And I am now fully reſolved, that nothing but a diſappointment in my expected ſupplies from Spain ſhall prevent me from proſecuting my original ſcheme; where, at any rate, ſucceſs is more certain, if not more eaſy."

The difficulty that reſulted from the want of a competent

reader was certainly a great one, and he felt it ſeverely. He talked with me much about it, but for a time there ſeemed no remedy. He went, therefore, courageouſly through ſeveral volumes of Spaniſh with a perſon who underſtood not a word of what he was reading. It was awkward, tedious work, — more diſagreeable to the reader, probably, than it was to the liſtener. But neither of them ſhrunk from the taſk, which ſometimes, notwithſtanding its gravity and importance, ſeemed ridiculous to both.[10]

Change of reader.

At laſt he was ſatisfied that his undertaking to write hiſtory was certainly practicable, and that he could ſubſtantially make his ears do the work of his eyes. It was an important concluſion, and its date is, therefore, one of the turning points of his life. He came to it about the time he prepared the letter to Mr. Everett, and in conſequence provided himſelf for a few months with a young reader of more accompliſhments, who ſubſequently became known in the world of letters, and was among thoſe who paid a tribute of graceful verſe to the hiſtorian's memory.[11]

This, however, was only a temporary expedient, and he was deſirous to have ſomething which ſhould be permanent. It coſt not a little time and labor to fit anybody for duties ſo peculiar, and he had no time and labor to ſpare, eſpecially if the embarraſſment ſhould recur as often as it had heretofore. Thinking, from my connection with Harvard College, where I was then at the head of the department of Modern Literature, that I might be acquainted with ſome young man who, on completing his academic career, would be willing to become his ſecretary for a conſiderable period, he addreſſed himſelf to

[10] In a letter to me written in the ſummer of 1827, when I happened to be on a journey to Niagara, he ſays: "My excellent reader and preſent ſcribe reads to me Spaniſh with a true Caſtilian accent two hours a day, without underſtanding a word of it. What do you think of this for the temperature of the dog-days? and which ſhould you rather be, the reader or the *readee?*" In a letter ten years later — Dec. 20, 1837 — to his friend Mr. Bancroft, he ſays, that among thoſe readings by a perſon who did not know the language were ſeven quarto volumes in Spaniſh.

[11] Mr. George Lunt.

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Mr. James L. Engliſh.

me. I adviſed with the inſtructors in the four modern languages, who knew the eſpecial qualifications of their pupils better than I did, and a fortunate reſult was ſoon reached. Mr. James L. Engliſh, who was then a member of the College, accepted a propoſition to ſtudy his profeſſion in the office of Mr. Preſcott, ſenior, and of his ſon-in-law, Mr. Dexter, who was then aſſociated with the elder Mr. Preſcott as a counſellor, and at the ſame time to read and write for the ſon five or ſix hours every day. This arrangement did not, however, take effect until after Mr. Engliſh was graduated, in 1827; and it continued, much to the ſatisfaction of both parties, for four years. It was the happy beginning of a new order of things for the ſtudies of the hiſtorian, and one which, with different ſecretaries or readers, he was able to keep up to the laſt.[12]

Mr. Preſcott thorough in ſtudies.

During the interval of almoſt a year, which immediately preceded the commencement of Mr. Engliſh's ſervices, nothing is more ſtriking than the amount and thoroughneſs of Mr. Preſcott's ſtudies. It in fact was a broad baſis that he now began to lay, in defiance of all the difficulties that beſet him, for a ſuperſtructure which yet, as he clearly foreſaw, could be erected only after a very long interval, if, indeed, he ſhould ever be permitted to erect it. It was, too, a baſis laid in the moſt deliberate manner, ſlowly and ſurely; for, as he could not now read at all himſelf, every page, as it was liſtened to, had to be carefully conſidered, and its contents carefully appropriated. Among the books thus read to him were Monteſquieu's "Spirit of Laws," Enfield's "Hiſtory of Philoſophy," Smith's "Wealth of Nations," Hallam's "Middle Ages," Blackſtone's "Commentaries," Vol. I., Millar's "Engliſh Government," the four concluding volumes of Gibbon, parts of Turner's "Hiſtory of England," parts of Moſheim's "Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory" and of John

[12] Mr. Preſcott's different readers and ſecretaries were, as nearly as I can remember and make out, — George R. M. Withington, for a ſhort period, which I cannot exactly determine; George Lunt, 1825–26; Hamilton Parker, 1826–27; James Lloyd Engliſh, 1827–31; Henry Cheever Simonds, 1831–35; E. Dwight Williams, 1835–40; George F. Ware, 1840–42; Edmund B. Otis, 1842–46; George F. Ware again, 1846–47; Robert Carter, 1847–48; John Foſter Kirk, 1848–59.

Müller's "Univerſal Hiſtory," Mills's "Hiſtory of Chivalry," the Memoirs of Commines, Robertſon's "Charles the Fifth" and his "America," and Watſon's "Philip the Second." Beſides all this, he liſtened to tranſlations of Plato's "Phædo," of Epictetus, of the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, and of Cicero's "Tuſculan Queſtions" and "Letters"; and, finally, he went in the ſame way through portions of Siſmondi's "Républiques Italiennes" in the original, as an experiment, and became perſuaded, from the facility with which he underſtood it when read at the rate of twenty-four pages an hour, that he ſhould meet with no abſolutely inſurmountable obſtacle in the proſecution of any of his hiſtorical plans. Everything, therefore, went according to his wiſh, and ſeemed propitious; but his eyes remained in a very bad ſtate. He was often in a dark room, and never able to uſe them for any of the practical purpoſes of ſtudy.[13]

Studies in Spaniſh.

Still, as always, his ſpirits roſe with the occaſion, and his courage proved equal to his ſpirits. He had a large part of the Spaniſh grammar read over to him, that he might feel quite ſure-footed in the language, and then, confirming anew his determination to write the Hiſtory of Ferdinand and Iſabella, he puſhed vigorouſly forward with his inveſtigations in that direction.

Readings.

He read, or rather liſtened to, Koch's "Révolutions de l'Europe"; Voltaire's "Eſſai ſur les Mœurs"; Gibbon, ſo far as the Viſigoths in Spain are concerned; and Conde's Spaniſh

[13] He makes hardly a note about his opinion on the authors embraced in his manifold ſtudies this year, from want of ſight to do it. But what he records about Robertſon and Watſon, brief as it is, is worth notice, becauſe theſe writers both come upon his choſen track. "Robertſon's extenſive ſubject," he ſays, "is neceſſarily deficient in connection; but a lively intereſt is kept up by a perpetual ſucceſſion of new diſcoveries and brilliant adventures, ſeaſoned with ſagacious reflections, and enriched with a clear and vigorous diction." In ſome remarks concerning Charles V., thirty years later, he does Dr. Robertſon the homage of calling him "the illuſtrious Scottiſh hiſtorian," but enters into no diſcuſſion of his peculiar merits. Of Watſon, on the contrary, in his private notes of 1827, he ſays that he is "a meagre unphiloſophical chronicler of the richeſt period of Spaniſh hiſtory"; an opinion ſubſtantially confirmed in the Preface to his own Philip II., in 1855, where a compliment is paid to Robertſon at Watſon's expenſe.

CHAP. VI. 1827. ÆT. 30.

Arabs. As he approached his main ſubject more nearly, he went through the reigns of ſeveral of the preceding and following Spaniſh ſovereigns in Ferreras's General Hiſtory of Spain, as well as in Rabbe, Morales, and Bigland; adding the whole of Gaillard's "Rivalité de la France et de l'Eſpagne," and of the Abbé Mignot's meagre "Hiſtoire de Ferdinand et Iſabelle." The geography of the country he had earlier ſtudied on minute maps, when his eyes had for a ſhort time permitted ſuch uſe of them, and he now endeavored to make himſelf familiar with the Spaniſh people and their national character, by liſtening to ſuch travellers as Bourgoing and Townſend. Finally, he finiſhed this part of his preparation by going afreſh over the concluding portions of Mariana's eloquent Hiſtory; thus obtaining from ſo many different ſources, not only a ſufficient and more than ſufficient mere baſis for his own work, but from Mariana the beſt general outline for it that exiſting materials could furniſh. It is not eaſy to ſee how he could have been more thorough and careful, even if he had enjoyed the full uſe of his ſight, nor how, with ſuch an infirmity, he could deliberately have undertaken and carried out a courſe of merely preparatory ſtudies ſo ample and minute.

Preparatory ſtudies.

But he perceived the peculiar embarraſſments, as well as the great reſources, of his ſubject, and endeavored to provide againſt them by long conſideration and reflection beforehand. In his Memoranda he ſays: —

Practical difficulties.

"I muſt not be too faſtidious, nor too anxious to amaſs every authority that can bear upon the ſubject. The materials that will naturally offer themſelves to me are abundant enough, in all conſcience. Whatever I write will have the merit at leaſt of novelty to an Engliſh reader. In ſuch parts of the ſubject, therefore, as have been well treated by French writers, I had better take them pretty cloſely for my guides, without troubling myſelf to hunt more deeply, except only for corroborative authorities, which can be eaſily done. It is fortunate that this ſubject is little known to Engliſh readers, while many parts of it have been ably diſcuſſed by acceſſible foreign writers, — ſuch as Marina and Sempere for the Conſtitution; Llorente for the Inquiſition; the ſixth volume of the Hiſtorical Tranſactions of the Spaniſh Academy for the influence and many details of Iſabella's reign, &c.; Fléchier for the life of Ximenes; Varillas for the foreign policy of Ferdinand; Siſmondi for the Italian

wars and for the general ſtate of Italian and European politics in that age, while the reflections of this hiſtorian *paſſim* may furniſh me with many good hints in an inveſtigation of the Spaniſh hiſtory and politics."

This was the view he took of his ſubject, as he fully confronted it for the firſt time, and conſidered how, with ſuch uſe of his eyes as he then had, he could beſt addreſs himſelf to the neceſſary examination of his authorities. But he now, and for ſome time ſubſequent, contemplated a ſhorter work than the one he finally wrote, and a work of much leſs learned pretenſions. As, however, he advanced, he found that the moſt minute inveſtigations, ſuch as he had above conſidered beyond his reach, would be both neceſſary and agreeable. He began, therefore, very ſoon to examine all the original ſources with painſtaking perſeverance, and to compare them, not only with each other, but with the interpretations that had ſubſequently been put upon them. He ſtruck much more widely and boldly than he had intended or thought important. In ſhort, he learned — and he learned it ſoon — that it is neceſſary for a conſcientious author to read everything upon the ſubject he means to diſcuſs; the poor and bad books, as well as thoſe upon which his reliance will ultimately be placed. He cannot otherwiſe feel ſtrong or ſafe.

Proposes a ſhorter work.

Mr. Preſcott had juſt reached this point in his ſtudies, when, in the autumn of 1827, Mr. Engliſh became his reader and ſecretary. The firſt collection of books and manuſcripts from Madrid had been received a little earlier. But they had not yet been uſed. They had come at a moſt unlucky moment, when his eye was in a more than commonly ſuffering ſtate, and they preſented anything but a cheerful proſpect to him, as they lay unpacked and ſpread out on the floor of his ſtudy. As he ſaid long afterwards, "In my diſabled condition, with my Tranſatlantic treaſures lying around me, I was like one pining from hunger in the midſt of abundance." [14]

Mr. Engliſh becomes his reader.

But he went to work in earneſt with his new ſecretary. The

[14] Conqueſt of Peru, (1857), Vol. I. p. xvi.

CHAP. VI. 1827. ÆT. 31.

Room in which he worked.

room in which they sat was an upper one in the back part of the fine old house in Bedford Street, retired and quiet, and every way well fitted for its purpose. Mr. English, in an interesting letter to me, thus truly describes it.

"Two sides of the room," he says, "were lined with books from floor to ceiling. On the easterly side was a green screen, which darkened that part of the room towards which he turned his face as he sat at his writing-table. On the westerly side was one window covered by several curtains of light-blue muslin, so arranged that any one of them could be wholly or partially raised, and thus temper the light exactly to the ability of his eye to bear it, as the sky might happen to be bright or cloudy, or his eye more or less sensitive. In the centre of the room stood his writing-table, at which he sat in a rocking-chair with his back towards the curtained window, and sometimes with a green shade over his eyes. When we had a fire, he used only coke in the grate, as giving out no flame, and he frequently placed a screen between himself and the grate to keep off the glare of the embers. At the northwesterly corner of the room was the only window not partly or wholly darkened. It was set high up in the wall, and under it was my chair. I was thus brought a short distance from his left side, and rather behind him, — as a sailor would say, on his quarter. In this position I read aloud to him regularly every day, from ten o'clock in the forenoon to two in the afternoon, and from about six in the evening to eight."

How he worked.

They began by reading portions of Llorente's "Histoire de l'Inquisition"; but their first serious attack was on the Chronicles of Andrés Bernaldez, not then printed, but obtained by him in manuscript from Madrid, — a gossiping, amusing book, whose accounts extend from 1488 to 1513, and are particularly important for the Moorish wars and the life of Columbus. But the young secretary found it very hard reading.

"A huge parchment-covered manuscript," he calls Bernaldez, "my old enemy; from whose pages I read and reread so many hours that I shall never forget him. Mr. Prescott considered the book a great acquisition, and would sit for hours hearing me read it in the Spanish, — at first with great difficulty and until I got familiar with the chirography. How he could understand me at first, as I blundered along, I could not conceive. If he was annoyed, — as he well might be, — he never betrayed his feelings to me.

"He seemed fully conscious of the difficulty of the task before him, but resolutely determined to accomplish it, if human patience and perseverance could do so. As I read any passages which he wished to impress on his memory, he would say, 'Mark that,' — that is, draw parallel lines in the margin with a pencil against it. He used also to take a note or memorandum

of anything he wiſhed particularly to remember, with a reference to it. His writing apparatus always lay open before him on the table, and he uſually ſat with his ivory ſtyle in hand, ready to make his notes of reference.[15] Theſe notes I afterwards copied out in a very large round hand for his future uſe, and, when he began actually to write the hiſtory, would read them over and verify the reference by the original authority, if he required it. I think, however, he did not very often find it neceſſary to refer to the book, as he ſeemed to have cultivated his memory to a very high degree, and had, beſides, a habit of reflecting upon and arranging in his mind, or 'digeſting,' as he phraſed it, the morning's reading while ſitting alone afterwards in his ſtudy. A graphic phraſe it was, too, conſidering that he took in through his ears I don't know how many pages at a four hours' ſeſſion of ſteady reading. The wonder was, how he could find time to 'digeſt' ſuch a load between the ſeſſions. But thus he fixed the ſubſtance of what had been read to him in his mind, and impreſſed the reſults of the forenoon's work on his memory.

How notes were made.

How he worked the notes up.

"When I firſt began to read to Mr. Preſcott, his eye was in a very ſenſitive ſtate, and he did not attempt to uſe it at all. After ſome months, however, it got ſtronger, and he would ſit at the curtained window, with a volume open upon a frame on a ſtand, and read himſelf, marking paſſages as he went along. While ſo reading, he would frequently raiſe or lower, wholly or partially, one or more of the blue curtains. Each of them had its ſeparate cord, which he knew as well as a ſailor knows his ropes. Every little white cloud that paſſed acroſs the ſky required a change in the arrangement of theſe curtains, ſo ſenſitive was his eye to a variation of light imperceptible to me. But it was only a portion of the time that he could do this. His eye would give way, or he would feel ſymptoms of returning trouble, and then, for weeks together, he would be compelled to take his old ſeat in the rocking-chair, and return to the ſlow proceſs of liſtening and marking paſſages, and having his notes and memoranda read over to him as at firſt."

Care of his eye.

How ſound and practical his general views were can be ſeen from his plan of work at this moment, when he had determined what he would do, but did not think himſelf nearly ready even to begin the actual compoſition of the Hiſtory itſelf. In October, 1828, when they had been at work for a year with this preparatory reading, but during which his private memoranda, owing to the ſtate of his eye, had been very meagre, he ſays: —

Preparation for writing.

"By the intermixture of reading for a given chapter and then writing for it,

[15] His peculiar writing apparatus, already alluded to, will be preſently deſcribed. It was the noctograph, which he had obtained in England.

CHAP. VI. 1828. ÆT. 32.

I shall be able, with the relief which this alternate occupation will give my eyes, to accomplish a good deal with them, I trust. After I have finished Bernaldez's manuscript and the few remaining pages of Ferreras, and looked through the 'Modern Universal History' from the accession of the house of Trastamara to the end of the reigns of the Catholic kings, and looked into Marina's "Theory of the Cortes," which will scarcely require more than a fortnight, I shall be prepared to *begin to read* for my first chapter."

He added to this a syllabus of what, from the point of view at which he then stood, he thought might be the arrangement of his materials for the first two chapters of his work; noting the length of time he might need to prepare himself to begin to write, and afterwards the time necessary to complete them.

Patience.

That he was willing to be patient is clear from the fact that he allowed two hundred and fifty-six days, or eight months and a half, to this preparatory reading, although he had already been two years, more or less, on the work; and that he was not to be discouraged by slowness of actual progress is equally clear, for, although it was above fourteen months before he finished this part of his task, yet at the end of that time his courage and hopes were as high as ever.

CHAPTER VII.

1829 – 1837.

Death of his Daughter. — Inquiries into the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion. — Reſults. — Examines the Hiſtory of the Spaniſh Arabs. — Reviews Irving's Granada. — Studies for his Work on Ferdinand and Iſabella. — Begins to write it. — Regard for Mably and Clemencin. — Progreſs of his Work. — At Pepperell. — At Nahant. — Finiſhes the "Hiſtory of Ferdinand and Iſabella."

THE long delay referred to in the laſt chapter was in part owing to a ſevere ſorrow which fell on him in the winter of 1828 – 9, and ſtopped him in mid-career. On the 1ſt of February, the eldeſt of his two children died. It was a daughter, born on the 23d of September, 1824, and therefore four years and four or five months old, — a charming, gentle child of much promiſe, who had been named after her grandmother, Catharine Hickling. He had doted on her. His mother ſaid moſt truly, writing to Mrs. Ticknor in 1825: "It is a very nice little girl, and William is one of the happieſt fathers you ever ſaw. All the time he can ſpare from Italian and Spaniſh ſtudies is devoted to this little pet." Mr. Engliſh remembers well how ſhe uſed to be permitted to come into the ſtudy, and interrupt whatever work was going on there, much to his own ſatisfaction as well as to the father's, for her engaging ways had won the ſecretary's

Death of his eldeſt child.

CHAP. VII. 1829. ÆT. 32.

love too. The ſhock of her death was very great, and was, beſides, ſomewhat ſudden. I have ſeldom ſeen ſorrow more deep; and, what was remarkable, the grandfather and grandmother were ſo much overcome by it as to need the conſolation they would otherwiſe have gladly given. It was, indeed, a much diſtreſſed houſe.[1]

But the father wrought out conſolation for himſelf in his own way. A fortnight after the death of his child he records: —

His thoughts on it.

"*February* 15*th*, 1829. — The death of my deareſt daughter on the firſt day of this month having made it impoſſible for me at preſent to reſume the taſk of compoſition, I have been naturally led to more ſerious reflection than uſual, and have occupied myſelf with reviewing the grounds of the deciſion which I made in 1819 in favor of the evidences of the Chriſtian revelation. I have endeavored and ſhall endeavor to proſecute this examination with perfect impartiality, and to guard againſt the preſent ſtate of my feelings influencing my mind any further than by leading it to give to the ſubject a more ſerious attention. And, ſo far, ſuch influence muſt be ſalutary and reaſonable, and far more deſirable than any counter influence which might be exerted by any engroſſing occupation with the cares and diſſipation of the world. So far, I believe, I have conducted the matter with ſober impartiality."

Inquiry into the truth of Chriſtianity.

What he did on this ſubject, as on all others, he did thoroughly and carefully. His ſecretary read to him the principal books which it was then conſidered important to go through when making a fair examination of the ſupernatural claims of Chriſtianity. Among them, on the one ſide, were Hume's Eſſays, and eſpecially the one on Miracles; Gibbon's fifteenth chapter, and parts of the ſixteenth; Middleton's "Free Inquiry," which, whatever were its author's real opinions, leans towards unbelief; and Soame Jenyns's ſomewhat eaſy diſcuſſion of the Evidences, which is yet not wanting in hidden ſkill and acuteneſs. On the other hand, he took Watſon's "Apology"; Brown's "Lectures," ſo far as they are an amplification of his admirably

[1] In a letter dated June 30, 1844, to Don Paſcual de Gayangos, who had juſt ſuffered from the loſs of a young child, Mr. Preſcott ſays, "A ſimilar calamity befell me ſome years ſince. It was my favorite child, taken away at the age of four, when all the lovelineſs and vivacity of the character is opening upon us. I never can ſuffer again as I then did. It was my firſt heavy ſorrow; and I ſuppoſe we cannot feel twice ſo bitterly."

condenſed "Eſſay on Cauſe and Effect"; ſeveral of Waterland's treatiſes; Butler's "Analogy" and Paley's "Evidences," with the portions of Lardner needful to explain and illuſtrate them. The laſt three works he valued more than all the others. But I think he relied mainly upon a careful reading of the four Goſpels, and an eſpecial inquiry into each one of the Saviour's miracles, as related by each of the Evangeliſts. This inveſtigation he made with his father's aſſiſtance, and, when it was over, he ſaid that he conſidered ſuch an examination, made with an old and learned lawyer, was a ſufficient pledge for the ſeverity of his ſcrutiny. He might have added, that it was the ſafer, becauſe the perſon who helped him in making it was not only a man of uncommon fairneſs of mind, perſpicacity, and wiſdom, but one who was very cautious, and, on all matters of evidence, had a tendency to ſcepticiſm rather than credulity.

Reſults.

The concluſions at which he arrived were, that the narratives of the Goſpels were authentic; that, after ſo careful an examination of them, he ought not to permit his mind to be diſturbed on the ſame queſtion again, unleſs he ſhould be able to make an equally faithful reviſion of the whole ſubject; and that, even if Chriſtianity were not a divine revelation, no ſyſtem of morals was ſo likely to fit him for happineſs here and hereafter. But he did not find in the Goſpels, or in any part of the New Teſtament, the doctrines commonly accounted orthodox, and he deliberately recorded his rejection of them. On one minor point, too, he was very explicit. He declared his purpoſe to avoid all habits of levity on religious topics. And to this purpoſe, I believe, he adhered rigorouſly through life. At leaſt, I am ſatisfied that I never heard him uſe light expreſſions or alluſions of any kind when ſpeaking of Chriſtianity, or when referring to the Scriptures. His mind, in fact, was reverential in its very nature, and ſo was his father's.[2]

[2] It was noticed by one of the members of his Club, — Dr. John Ware, whoſe judgment and acuteneſs render his obſervation important, — that Mr. Preſcott was much intereſted whenever the ſubject of religion, or anything that claimed to be connected with the ſpiritual world, came up in the familiar diſcuſſions of their meetings. "He was always deſirous," ſays Dr. Ware, "to hear ſomething about mag-

CHAP. VII.
1829.
ÆT. 32.

Writes for the North American Review.

After a few weeks devoted to theſe inquiries, he reſumed his accuſtomed ſtudies. At the moment when they had been broken off, he was not employed regularly on his Hiſtory. He had already ſtepped aſide to write an article for the "North American Review." During eight years he had been in the habit occaſionally of contributing what he ſometimes called "his peppercorn" to that well-eſtabliſhed and reſpectable periodical; regarding his contributions as an exerciſe in writing which could not fail to be uſeful to him. His firſt experiments of this ſort, ſaving always the youthful failure already recorded, were, I ſuppoſe, two ſhort articles, in 1821, on Sprague's beautiful prize "Ode to Shakeſpeare," and on Byron's Letter upon Pope. Theſe had been followed, with the regularity that marked almoſt everything he did, by a ſingle article on ſome literary ſubject every ſucceeding year. It was an excellent diſcipline for him as a beginner, and although, from the ſlowneſs with which he neceſſarily worked, it took much time, he never, I think, ſeriouſly regretted the ſacrifice it implied.

Examination of Conde's Hiſtory.

But now, being engroſſed with his inquiries into early Spaniſh hiſtory, he preferred to take a ſubject immediately connected with them. He wrote, therefore, an article on Conde's "Hiſtory of the Arabs in Spain," compriſing a general view of the Arabian character and civilization. It was prepared with great care. He gave much time to previous reading and ſtudy on the ſubject, — I do not know exactly how much, but certainly three months, probably four, — and it was not till nearly ſeven months after he firſt began to collect materials for the article that it was completed;[3] from which, however, ſhould

netiſm, when that was in vogue, and ſtill more about ſpiritual manifeſtations, when they came in faſhion." This falls in with my own recollections and impreſſions. He went once certainly, and I think more than once, to witneſs the exhibitions of a medium. But no effect was produced on his mind. He was always ſlow of belief. His hiſtorical judgments prove this, and what he ſaw of "the manifeſtations," as they were called, reſted on nothing like the evidence he was accuſtomed to require. Beſides, they offended the ſentiment of reverence, which, as I have ſaid, was ſtrong in his whole nature.

[3] The manuſcript notes for this article, now before me, are extraordinarily elaborate and minute. They fill two hundred and forty-four large foolſcap pages, and have an index to them.

be deducted the ſorrowful period of ſeveral weeks that preceded and followed his little daughter's death. But, after all, he did not ſend it to the periodical publication for which it had been written. He found, perhaps, that it was too important for his own ulterior purpoſes; certainly, that it was not fitted for the more popular tone of ſuch a work as the "North American." Subſtituting for it, therefore, a pleaſant article on Irving's "Conqueſt of Granada," which had coſt him much leſs labor, but which was quite as intereſting, he laid the one on Conde quietly aſide, and finally, with ſome modifications, uſed it as the eighth chapter in the Firſt Part of his Ferdinand and Iſabella, where it ſtands now, an admirable foreground to the brilliant picture of the ſiege and fall of Granada.[4]

Review of Irving's Conqueſt of Granada.

It was June, 1829, before he returned to his regular readings preparatory to the actual compoſition of Ferdinand and Iſabella. In his more leiſure hours, generally in the evening, he went over ſeveral works, half biography, half hiſtory, — ſuch as Miſs Aikin's "Queen Elizabeth," Voltaire's "Charles XII.," and Roſcoe's "Lorenzo de' Medici" and his "Leo X.," — to ſee if he could glean from them any ideas for the general management of his ſubject; while, for eaſy, finiſhed narrative, he liſtened to large portions of Barante's "Ducs de Bourgogne," and ſtudied with ſome care Thierry, — the marvellous, blind Thierry, — for whom he always felt a ſtrong ſympathy in conſequence of their common misfortune, and to whoſe manner of treating hiſtory with a free citation of the old ballads and chronicles he was much inclined. From all this, perhaps, he gained little, except warnings what to avoid. At the ſame time, however, that he was doing it, he gave his forenoons to the direct, ſevere ſtudy of his ſubject. He advanced ſlowly, to be ſure; for his eyes were in a very bad ſtate, and he was obliged to depend entirely on his reader when going through even

General reading.

[4] Mr. Bancroft, in a review of Ferdinand and Iſabella, ſelects this chapter as a happy illuſtration of the faithful induſtry with which the work is written. "Let any American ſcholar," he ſays, "turn, for inſtance, to the chapter on the literature of the Saracens, and aſk himſelf, how long a period would be required to prepare for writing it." — Democratic Review, (1838,) Vol. II. p. 162.

CHAP. VII. 1829. ÆT. 33.

Special ſtudies.

ſuch important works as thoſe of Marina and Sempere on the Cortes, and Palencia's Chronicle of the time of Henry IV. Still he got on, and, in the courſe of the ſummer, prepared an elaborate ſynopſis of the chief events to be diſcuſſed in his contemplated hiſtory; all chronologically arranged from 1454, when John II., Iſabella's father, died, to 1516, the date of Ferdinand's death, which, of courſe, would cloſe the work.

From this ſynopſis, and eſpecially from the eſtimate it involved of the proportions of its different diviſions, he, indeed, ſometimes varied, as his ample materials were unrolled before him. But the whole plan, as he then digeſted it, ſhows that he had maſtered the outline of his ſubject, and comprehended juſtly the relations and combinations of its various parts. He thought, however, that he could bring it all into two moderate volumes in octavo. In this he was miſtaken. The work, from his thorough and faithful treatment of it, grew under his hands, and the world is not ſorry that at laſt it was extended to three.

Begins to write.

On the 6th of October, 1829, — three years and a half from the time when he had ſelected his ſubject, and begun to work upon it, — he finally broke ground with its actual compoſition. He had then been three months reading and taking notes excluſively for the firſt chapter. It was a month before that chapter was finiſhed, and afterwards it was all rewritten. Two months more brought him to the end of the third chapter; and, although the ſpace filled by the three ſo greatly overran the eſtimate in his ſynopſis as to alarm him, he ſtill felt that he had made good progreſs, and took courage. He was, in fact, going on at a rate which would make his Hiſtory fill five volumes, and yet it was long before he gave up the ſtruggle to keep it down to two. Similar trouble he encountered all the way through his work. He was conſtantly overrunning his own calculations, and unreaſonably diſſatisfied with himſelf for his miſtakes and bad reckoning.

Two things are noteworthy at this ſtage of his progreſs, becauſe one of them influenced the whole of his ſubſequent

life as an hiſtorian, and the other did much towards giving a direction and tone to his diſcuſſion of the characters and reign of Ferdinand and Iſabella.

The firſt is his increaſed regard for Mably as a counſellor and guide. In January, 1830, after looking afreſh through ſome of Mably's works, there occurs the following notice of him, chiefly with reference to his treatiſe "Sur l'Étude de l'Hiſtoire," which, as we have already noticed, had engaged his careful attention five years earlier: [5] "He takes wide views, and his politics are characterized by directneſs and good faith. I have marked occaſionally paſſages in the portions I have looked over which will be worth recurring to. I like particularly his notion of the neceſſity of giving an intereſt as well as utility to hiſtory, by letting events tend to ſome obvious point or moral; in ſhort, by paying ſuch attention to the development of events tending to this leading reſult, as one would in the conſtruction of a romance or a drama." A few days afterwards he records the way in which he propoſes to apply this principle to the "Hiſtory of Ferdinand and Iſabella." With what ſucceſs he ſubſequently carried it out in his "Conqueſt of Mexico" need not be told. In each inſtance he was aware of the direction his work was taking, and cites Mably as the authority for it. The ſame purpoſe is plain in the "Conqueſt of Peru," although the conditions of the caſe did not permit it to be equally applicable. [6]

Étude de l'Hiſtoire, par Mably.

[5] He calls Mably "a perſpicuous, ſevere, ſhrewd, and ſenſible writer, full of thought, and of ſuch thoughts as ſet the reader upon thinking for himſelf."

[6] In 1841, when he was occupied with the Conqueſt of Mexico, he ſays, "Have read, for the tenth time, 'Mably sur l'Étude de l'Hiſtoire,' full of admirable reflections and hints. Pity that his love of the ancients made him high gravel-blind to the merits of the moderns." This treatiſe, which Mr. Preſcott ſtudied with ſuch care and perſeverance, was written by Mably, as a part of the courſe of inſtruction arranged by Condillac, Mably's kinſman, for the uſe of the heir to the dukedom of Parma, and it was printed in 1775. Mably was, no doubt, often extravagant and unſound in his opinions, and is now little regarded. How the author of Ferdinand and Iſabella hit upon a work ſo generally overlooked, I do not know, except that nothing ſeemed to eſcape him that could be made to ſerve his purpoſe. On another occaſion, when ſpeaking of it, he implies that its precepts may not be applicable to political hiſtories generally, which often require a treatment more philoſophical. But that he conſulted it much when writing the Ferdinand and Iſabella, and the Conqueſt of Mexico, is not doubtful.

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Elogio de Iſabel, por Clemencin.

The other circumſtance to which I referred, as worthy of notice at this time, is Mr. Preſcott's increaſed and increaſing ſenſe of the importance of what Don Diego Clemencin had done in his "Elogio de la Réina Doña Iſabel," for the life of that great ſovereign. This remarkable work, which, in an imperfect outline, its author had read to the Spaniſh Academy of Hiſtory in 1807, he afterwards enlarged and enriched, until, when it was publiſhed in 1821, it filled the whole of the ſixth ample volume of the Memoirs of that learned body. Mr. Preſcott, above a year earlier, had conſulted it, and placed it among the books to be carefully ſtudied, but now he uſed it conſtantly. Later, he ſaid it was "a moſt rich repoſitory of unpubliſhed facts, to be diligently ſtudied by me at every pauſing point in my hiſtory." And in a note at the end of his ſixth chapter he pronounces it to be a work of ineſtimable ſervice to the hiſtorian. Theſe tributes to the modeſt, faithful learning of the Secretary of the Spaniſh Academy of Hiſtory, who was afterwards its Director, are alike creditable to him who offered them, and to Don Diego de Clemencin, who was then no longer among the living, and to whom they could not, therefore, be offered in flattery.

State of his ſight.

But while the hiſtorian of Ferdinand and Iſabella valued Mably and Clemencin as truſtworthy guides, he read everything, and judged and decided for himſelf concerning everything, as he went on. His progreſs, indeed, was on theſe and on all accounts ſlow. His eye at this period was not in a condition to enable him to uſe it except with the greateſt caution. He ſometimes felt obliged to conſider the contingency of loſing the uſe of it altogether, and had the courage to determine, even in that event, to go on with his Hiſtory. How patient he muſt have been, we may judge from the fact, that, in ſixteen months, he was not able to accompliſh more than three hundred pages. But neither then, nor at any time afterwards, was he diſheartened by the difficulties he encountered. On the contrary, although progreſs — perceptible progreſs — was very important to his happineſs, he was content to have it very ſlow. Sometimes,

however, he went on more eaſily, and then he was much encouraged. In the ſummer of 1832, when he had been very induſtrious for two months, he wrote to me, "I have diſpoſed of three chapters of my work, which is pretty good hammering for a Cyclops." Such intervals of freer labor gave him a great impulſe. He enjoyed his own induſtry and ſucceſs, and his original good ſpirits did the reſt.

General views of his ſubject.

As he advanced, his ſubject cleared up before him, and he arranged it at laſt in two nearly equal diviſions; the firſt illuſtrating more particularly the domeſtic policy of the ſovereigns, and bringing Iſabella into the foreground; and the ſecond making their foreign policy and the influence and management of Ferdinand more prominent. In each he felt more and more the importance of giving intereſt to his work by preſerving for it a character of unity, and keeping in view ſome pervading moral purpoſe. One thing, however, diſappointed him. He perceived certainly that it muſt be extended to three volumes. This he regretted. But he reſolved that in no event would he exceed this eſtimate, and he was happily able to keep his reſolution, although it coſt him much ſelf-denial to do it. He was conſtantly exceeding his allowance of ſpace, and as conſtantly condenſing and abridging his work afterwards, ſo as to come within it. To this part of his labor he gave full two years. It was a long time; but, as he advanced with a ſtep aſſured by experience, his progreſs became at leaſt more even and eaſy, if not faſter.

The early part of the ſummer of 1835, which he paſſed at Pepperell, was peculiarly agreeable and happy. He felt that his work was at laſt completely within his control, and was approaching its termination. He even began to be impatient, which he had never been before.

In a pleaſant letter to his friend Mr. Bancroft, dated Pepperell, June 17, 1835, he ſays: —

Letter to Mr. Bancroft.

"I find the country, as uſual, favorable to the hiſtoric Muſe. I am ſo near the term of my labors, that, if I were to remain here ſix months longer, I ſhould be eady to launch my cock-boat, or rather *gondola*, — for it is a heavy three-

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volume affair, — into the world. A winter's campaigning in the metropolis, however, will throw me back, I ſuppoſe, ſix months further. I have little more to do than bury and write the epitaphs of the Great Captain, Ximenes, and Ferdinand. Columbus and Iſabella are already ſent to their account. So my preſent occupation ſeems to be that of a ſexton, and I begin to weary of it."[7]

A month later he went, as uſual, to the ſea-ſhore for the hot ſeaſon. But, before he left the ſpot always ſo dear to him, he recorded the following characteriſtic reflections and reſolutions: —

"July 12th, 1835. — In three days, the 15th, we leave Pepperell, having been here nearly ten weeks. We found the country in its barren ſpring, and leave it in the prime dreſs of ſummer. I have enjoyed the time, and may look back on it with ſome ſatisfaction, for I have not miſſpent it, as the record will ſhow.

Happineſs in labor.

"On the whole, there is no happineſs ſo great as that of a permanent and lively intereſt in ſome intellectual labor. I, at leaſt, could never be tolerably contented without it. When, therefore, I get ſo abſorbed by pleaſures — particularly exciting pleaſures — as to feel apathy, in any degree, in my literary purſuits, juſt in that degree I am leſs happy. No other enjoyment can compenſate, or approach to, the ſteady ſatisfaction and conſtantly increaſing intereſt of active literary labor, — the ſubject of meditation when I am out of my ſtudy, of diligent ſtimulating activity within, — to ſay nothing of the comfortable conſciouſneſs of directing my powers in ſome channel worthy of them, and of contributing ſomething to the ſtock of uſeful knowledge in the world. As this muſt be my principal material for happineſs, I ſhould cultivate thoſe habits and amuſements moſt congenial with it, and theſe will be the quiet domeſtic duties — which will alſo be my greateſt pleaſures — and temperate ſocial enjoyments, not too frequent and without exceſs; for the exceſs of to-day will be a draft on health and ſpirits to-morrow. Above all, obſerve if my intereſt be weakened in any degree in my purſuits. If ſo, be ſure I am purſuing a wrong courſe ſomewhere, — wrong even in an Epicurean ſenſe for my happineſs, — and reform it at once.

Views of life.

"With theſe occupations and temperate amuſement, ſeek to do ſome good to ſociety by an intereſt in obviouſly uſeful and benevolent objects. Preſerve a calm, philoſophical, elevated way of thinking on all ſubjects connected with the action of life. Think more ſeriouſly of the conſequences of conduct. Cheriſh devotional feelings of reliance on the Deity. Diſcard a habit of ſneering or

[7] The mother of the future hiſtorian and ſtateſman was an early friend of the elder Mrs. Preſcott, and the attachment of the parents was betimes transferred to the children. From the period of Mr. Bancroft's return home, after ſeveral years ſpent in Europe, where his academic courſe was completed, this attachment was cemented by conſtant intercourſe and intimacy with the Preſcott family, and was never broken until it was broken by death. Some alluſions to this friendſhip have already been made. More will be found hereafter.

ſcepticiſm. Do not attempt impoſſibilities, or, in other words, to arrive at certainty [as if] on queſtions of hiſtoric evidence; but be content that there is evidence enough to influence a wiſe man in the courſe of his conduct, — enough to produce an aſſent, if not a mathematical demonſtration to his mind, — and that the great laws for our moral government are laid down with undeniable, unimpeachable truth."

At Nahant.

A week after the date of theſe laſt reflections, he was quietly eſtabliſhed at Nahant, having remained, as uſual, two or three days in Boſton to look after affairs that could not be attended to in the country. But he always diſliked theſe periodical changes and removals. They broke up his habits, and made a return to his regular occupations more or leſs difficult and unſatisfactory. On this occaſion, coming from the tranquillizing influences of Pepperell, where he had been more than commonly induſtrious and happy, he makes an amuſing record of a fit of low ſpirits and impatience, which is worth notice, becauſe it is the only one to be found in all his memoranda: —

Impatience.

"July 19th. — Moved to Nahant yeſterday. A moſt *conſumed* fit of vapors. The place looks dreary enough after the green fields of Pepperell. Don't like the air as well either, — too chilly, — find I bear and like hot weather better than I uſed to. Begin to ſtudy, — that is the beſt way of reſtoring equanimity. Be careful of my eyes at firſt, till accommodated to the glare. Hope I ſhall find this good working ground, — have generally found it ſo. This ink is too pale to write further. Everything goes wrong here."

But he had a good ſeaſon for work at Nahant, after all. He wrote there, not only the troubleſome account of the Conqueſt of Navarre, but the brilliant chapters on the deaths of Gonſalvo de Córdova and Ferdinand, leaving only the adminiſtration and fall of Cardinal Ximenes for a dignified cloſe to the whole narrative part of the hiſtory, and thus giving a ſort of tragical *dénouement* to it, ſuch as he deſired. This he completed in Boſton, about the middle of November.

Difficult concluſion.

A chapter to review the whole of his ſubject, and point it with its appropriate moral, was, however, ſtill wanted. It was a difficult taſk, and he knew it; for, among other things, it involved a general and careful examination of the entire legiſ-

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lation of a period in which great changes had taken place, and permanent reforms had been introduced. He allowed five months for it. It took above ſeven, but it is an admirable part of his work, and worth all the time and labor it coſt him.

Finiſhes "Ferdinand and Iſabella."

At laſt, on the 25th of June, 1836, he finiſhed the concluding note of the concluding chapter to the "Hiſtory of Ferdinand and Iſabella." Reckoning from the time when he wrote the firſt page, or from a period a little earlier, when he prepared a review of Conde on the Spaniſh Arabs, which he ſubſequently made a chapter in his work, the whole had been on his hands a little more than ſeven years and a half; and, deducting nine months for illneſs and literary occupations not connected with his Hiſtory, he made out that he had written, during that time, at the rate of two hundred and thirty-four printed pages a year. But he had read and labored on the ſubject much in the two or three years that preceded the beginning of its abſolute compoſition, and another year of corrections in the proof-ſheets followed before it was fairly delivered to the world at Chriſtmas, 1837. He was, therefore, exact, even after making all the deductions that can belong to the caſe, when, in his general eſtimate, he ſaid that he had given to the work ten of the beſt years of his life.

CHAPTER VIII.

1837 - 1838.

Doubts about publiſhing the "Hiſtory of Ferdinand and Iſabella." — Four Copies printed as it was written. — Opinions of Friends. — The Author's own Opinion of his Work. — Publiſhes it. — His Letters about it. — Its Succeſs. — Its Publication in London. — Reviews of it in the United States and in Europe.

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STRANGE as it may ſeem, it is nevertheleſs true, that after theſe ten years of labor on the Ferdinand and Iſabella, and with the full happineſs he felt on completing that work, Mr. Preſcott yet heſitated at laſt whether he ſhould publiſh it or not. As early as 1833, and from that time forward, while the compoſition was going on, he had cauſed four copies of it to be printed in large type on one ſide only of the leaf. For this he had two reaſons. If he ſhould determine to publiſh the work in London, he could ſend a fair, plain copy to be printed from; — and, at any rate, from ſuch a copy he might himſelf, whenever his eye could endure the taſk, reviſe the whole perſonally, making on the blank pages ſuch corrections and alterations as he might find deſirable. This taſk was already accompliſhed. He had gone over the whole, a little at a time, with care. Some portions he had rewritten. The first chapter he wrote out three times, and printed it twice, before it was finally put in ſtereotype, and adjuſted to its place as it now ſtands.

Four copies printed privately.

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Doubts about publiſhing.

Still he heſitated. He conſulted with his father, as he always did when he doubted in relation to matters of conſequence. His father not only adviſed the publication, but told him that "the man who writes a book which he is afraid to publiſh is a coward." This ſtirred the blood of his grandfather in his veins, and decided him.[1]

Note of Mr. Jared Sparks.

He had, however, the concurrent teſtimony of judicious and faithful friends. Mr. Sparks, the hiſtorian, in a note dated February 24th, 1837, ſays: "I have read ſeveral chapters, and am reading more. The book will be ſucceſsful,— bought, read, and praiſed." And Mr. Pickering, the modeſt, learned, philoſophical philologiſt, to whom he ſubmitted it a little later, ſent him more deciſive encouragement under date of May 1ſt.

Note of Mr. J. Pickering.

MY DEAR SIR,

Being uninterrupted laſt evening, I had an opportunity to finiſh the few pages that remained of your work, and I now return the volumes with many thanks. I cannot, however, take leave of them without again expreſſing the high ſatiſfaction I feel that our country ſhould have produced ſuch a work, — a work which, unleſs I am much miſtaken, will live as long as any one produced by your contemporaries either here or in England.

I am, my dear ſir, with the warmeſt regard,

Very truly yours,

JOHN PICKERING.

Corrections of Mr. W. H. Gardiner.

His friend Mr. Gardiner had already gone over the whole of the three volumes with his accuſtomed faithfulneſs, and with a critical judgment which few poſſeſs. He had ſuggeſted an important alteration in the arrangement of ſome of the early chapters, which was gladly adopted, and had offered minor corrections and verbal criticiſm of all ſorts, with the freedom which their old friendſhip demanded, but a conſiderable part of which were, with the ſame freedom, rejected; the author maintaining, as he always did, a perfect independence of judgment in all ſuch matters.

How he himſelf looked upon his ten years' labor may be

[1] Griſwold's Proſe Writers of America, 1847, p. 372.

ſeen by the following extracts from his Memoranda, before he paſſed the final, fatal bourn of the preſs. After giving ſome account of his ſlow progreſs and its cauſes, he ſays, under date of June 26th, 1836, when he had recorded the abſolute completion of the Hiſtory: —

His own ſatisfaction in his work.

"Purſuing the work in this quiet, leiſurely way, without over-exertion or fatigue, or any ſenſe of obligation to complete it in a given time, I have found it a continual ſource of pleaſure. It has furniſhed food for my meditations, has given a direction and object to my ſcattered reading, and ſupplied me with regular occupation for hours that would otherwiſe have filled me with *ennui*. I have found infinite variety in the ſtudy, moreover, which might at firſt ſight ſeem monotonous. No hiſtorical labors, rightly conducted, can be monotonous, ſince they afford all the variety of purſuing a chain of facts to unforeſeen conſequences, of comparing doubtful and contradictory teſtimony, of picturesque delineations of incident, and of analyſis and dramatic exhibition of character. The plain narrative may be ſometimes relieved by general views or critical diſcuſſions, and the ſtory and the actors, as they grow under the hands, acquire conſtantly additional intereſt. It may ſeem dreary work to plod through barbarous old manuſcript chronicles of monks and pedants, but this takes up but a ſmall portion of the time, and even here, read aloud to, as I have been, required ſuch cloſe attention as always made the time paſs glibly. In ſhort, although I have ſometimes been obliged to whip myſelf up to the work, I have never fairly got into it without deriving pleaſure from it, and I have moſt generally gone to it with pleaſure, and left it with regret.

His moderate expectations from it.

"What do I expect from it, now it is done? And may it not be all in vain and labor loſt, after all? My expectations are not ſuch, if I know myſelf, as to expoſe me to any ſerious diſappointment. I do not flatter myſelf with the idea that I have achieved anything very profound, or, on the other hand, that will be very popular. I know myſelf too well to ſuppoſe the former for a moment. I know the public too well, and the ſubject I have choſen, to expect the latter. But I have made a book illuſtrating an unexplored and important period, from authentic materials, obtained with much difficulty, and probably in the poſſeſſion of no one library, public or private, in Europe. As a plain, veracious record of facts, the work, therefore, till ſome one elſe ſhall be found to make a better one, will fill up a gap in literature which, I ſhould hope, would give it a permanent value, — a value founded on its utility, though bringing no great fame or gain to its author.

"Come to the worſt, and ſuppoſe the thing a dead failure, and the book born only to be damned. Still it will not be all in vain, ſince it has encouraged me in forming ſyſtematic habits of intellectual occupation, and proved to me that my greateſt happineſs is to be the reſult of ſuch. It is no little matter to be poſſeſſed of this conviction from experience."

And again, in the following October, when he had entirely prepared his work for the preſs, he writes: —

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"Thus ends the labor of ten years, for I have been occupied more or less with it, in general or particular readings, since the summer of 1826, when, indeed, from the disabled state of my eyes, I studied with little spirit and very little expectation of reaching this result. But what result? Three solid octavos of facts, important in themselves, new in an English dress, and which, therefore, however poor may be the execution of the work, must have some value in an historic view. With the confidence in its having such a value, however humble it may be, I must rest contented. And I now part with the companion of so many years with the cheering conviction, that, however great or little good it may render the public, it has done much to me, by the hours it has helped to lighten, and the habits of application it has helped to form."

Stereotypes the work.

He caused the whole to be stereotyped without delay. This mode he preferred, because it was one which left him a more complete control of his own work than he could obtain in any other way, and because, if it rendered corrections and alterations more difficult, it yet insured greater typographical accuracy at the outset.

Mr. C. Folsom corrects it.

Mr. Charles Folsom, a member of the pleasant club that had been formed many years before, superintended its publication with an absolute fidelity, good taste, and kindness that left nothing to desire; although, as the author, when referring to his friend's criticisms and suggestions, says, they made his own final revision anything but a sinecure. It was, I suppose, as carefully carried through the press as any work ever was in this country. The pains that had been taken with its preparation from the first were continued to the last.

Contract for publishing.

That it was worth the many years of patient, conscientious labor bestowed upon it, the world was not slow to acknowledge. It was published in Boston by the American Stationers' Company, — a corporate body that had a short time before been organized under favorable auspices, but which troubles in the financial condition of the country and other causes did not permit long to continue its operations. The contract with them was a very modest one. It was dated April 10th, 1837, and stipulated, on their part, for the use of the stereotype plates and of the engravings already prepared at the author's charge. From these, twelve hundred and fifty copies might be struck off at the expense of the Company, who were to have five years to

disposé of them. The bargain, however, was not, in one point of view, unfavorable. It insured the zealous and interested co-operation of a large and somewhat influential body in the sale and distribution of the work, — a matter of much more importance at that time than it would be now, when book-selling as a business and profession in the United States is so much more advanced. Otherwise, as a contract, it was certainly not brilliant in its promise. But the author thought well of it; and, since profit had not been his object, he was entirely satisfied.

The author's view of his contract.

I was then in Italy, having been away from home with my family nearly two years, during which I had constantly received letters from him concerning the progress of his work. On this occasion he wrote to me, April 11th, 1837, the very day after the date of his contract, as follows: —

"If your eyes are ever greeted with the aspect of the old North [American Review] in your pilgrimage, you may see anounced the 'History of Ferdinand and Isabella, 3 vols., 8vo,' as in press, which means, will be out in October. The American Stationers' Company — a company got up with a considerable capital for the publication of expensive works — have contracted for an edition of twelve hundred and fifty copies. I find the stereotype plates, which cost not a great deal more than the ordinary mode of composition, and they the paper and all other materials, and pay me a thousand dollars. The offer was a liberal one, and entirely answers my purpose of introducing the work into the channels of circulation, which I could not have effected by so small an inducement as a commission to a publisher. The Company, as proprietors of the edition, have every motive to disseminate it, and they have their agencies diffused through every part of the United States. What has given me most satisfaction is the very handsome terms in which the book has been recommended by Messrs. Pickering and Sparks, two of the committee for determining on the publication by the Company, and the former of whom, before perusal, expressed himself, as I know, unfavorably to the work as a *marketable* concern, from the nature of the subject. My ambition will be fully satisfied, if the judgments of the few whose good opinion I covet are but half so favorable as those publicly expressed by these gentlemen. . . . . .

His anxiety about publishing.

"I must confess I feel some disquietude at the prospect of coming in full bodily presence, as it were, before the public. I have always shrunk from such an exhibition, and, during the ten years I have been occupied with the work, few of my friends have heard me say as many words about it. When I saw my name — harmonious 'Hickling' and all — blazoned in the North American, it gave me, as S—— would say, 'quite a turn,' — anything but agreeable. But I am in

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for it. Of one thing I feel confident, — that the book has been compiled from materials, and with a fidelity, which muſt make it fill a *hiatus deflendus* in Spaniſh hiſtory. For the ſame reaſons, I cannot think that I have much to fear from criticiſm; not to add, that the rarity of my materials is ſuch, that I doubt if any but a Spaniard poſſeſſes the previous knowledge of the whole ground for a fair and competent judgment of my hiſtorical accuracy. But enough and too much of this egotiſm; though I know you and Anna love me too well to call it egotiſm, and will feel it to be only the unreſerved communication made around one's own fireſide."

Immediate ſucceſs of the work.

A great ſurpriſe to all the parties concerned followed the publication. Five hundred copies only were ſtruck off at firſt; that number being thought quite ſufficient for an experiment ſo doubtful as this was believed to be. No urgency was uſed to have the whole even of this inconſiderable edition ready for early diſtribution and ſale. But during ſeveral days the demand was ſo great, that copies could not be prepared by the bookbinder as faſt as they were called for. Three fifths of the whole number were diſpoſed of in Boſton before any could be ſpared to go elſewhere, and all diſappeared in five weeks. In a few months, more copies were ſold than by the contract it had been aſſumed could be diſpoſed of in five years; and from the beginning of May, 1838, — that is, in the courſe of four months from its firſt publication, — the Hiſtory itſelf ſtood before the public in the poſition it has maintained ever ſince. A ſucceſs ſo brilliant had never before been reached in ſo ſhort a time by any work of equal ſize and gravity on this ſide of the Atlantic. Indeed, nothing of the ſort had approached it.

Mr. W. H. Gardiner on its firſt ſucceſs.

"But," as his friend Mr. Gardiner has truly ſaid, "this wonderfully rapid ſale of a work ſo grave, beginning in his own town, was due in the firſt inſtance largely to its author's great perſonal popularity in ſociety, and may be taken as a ſignal proof of it. For Mr. Preſcott had acquired earlier no marked reputation as an author. As a mere man of letters, his ſubſtantial merits were known only by a few intimate friends; perhaps not fully appreciated by them. To the public he was little known in any way. But he was a prodigious favorite with whatever was moſt cultivated in the ſociety of Boſton. Few men ever had ſo many warmly attached perſonal friends. Still fewer — without more or leſs previous diſtinction or fame — had ever been ſought as companions by young and old of both ſexes as he had been. When, therefore, it came to be known that the ſame perſon who had ſo attracted them by an extraordinary combination of charming perſonal qualities was about to publiſh a book, — and it was

known only a very ſhort time before the book itſelf appeared, — the fact excited the greateſt ſurpriſe, curioſity, and intereſt.

"The day of its appearance was looked forward to and talked of. It came, and there was a perfect ruſh to get copies. A convivial friend, for inſtance, who was far from being a man of letters, — indeed, a perſon who rarely read a book, — got up early in the morning, and went to wait for the opening of the publiſher's ſhop, ſo as to ſecure the firſt copy. It came out at Chriſtmas, and was at once adopted as the faſhionable Chriſtmas and New Year's preſent of the ſeaſon. Thoſe who knew the author read it from intereſt in him. No one read it without ſurpriſe and delight. Mr. Daniel Webſter, the ſtatesman, who knew Preſcott well in ſociety, was as much ſurpriſed as the reſt, and ſpoke of him as a comet which had ſuddenly blazed out upon the world in full ſplendor.

"Such is the hiſtory of this remarkable ſale at its outbreak. Love of the author gave the firſt impetus. That given, the extraordinary merits of the work did all the reſt."

Negotiations for publiſhing in London.

Meantime negotiations had been going on for its publication in London. My friend had written to me repeatedly about them, and ſo unreaſonably moderate were his hopes, that, at one time, he had thought either not to publiſh it at all in the United States, or to give away the work here, and make his chief venture in England. As early as the 29th of December, 1835, he had written to me in Dreſden, where I then was: —

His own views about it.

"Before cloſing my letter, I ſhall detain you a little about my own affairs. I have nearly cloſed my *magnum opus*, — that is, I ſhall cloſe it, and have a copy of it printed, I truſt, early next autumn. I print, you know, only four copies, deſigning, whether I publiſh it here or not, to have it printed in England. . . . . .

"Although the ſubject has nothing in it to touch the times and preſent topics of intereſt and excitement particularly, yet, as filling up a blank of importance in modern hiſtory, I cannot but think, if decently executed, that it will not be difficult to find ſome publiſher in London who would be intereſted in it. You know that lucre is not my object. I wiſh, if poſſible, to give the work a fair chance under fair auſpices. As to the merits of the work, it will be eaſy to form a judgment, ſince the bookſeller will have the advantage of a fair printed copy. Now I wiſh your advice, how I had beſt proceed? If you ſhould be in London next winter, my courſe would be clear. I would ſend the book to you, and doubt not you would put it in a train for getting it into the world, if any reſpectable *accoucheur* could be found to take charge of it. If you ſhould not be there, as is moſt probable, can you adviſe me what to do next? . . . . .

"I think it poſſible I may print the book here ſimultaneouſly. —— offered the other day to take the concern off my hands, if I would give him the firſt

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impreſſion of a certain number of copies. As I have no illuſory hopes of a ſecond, I don't know that I can do better. But I am perſuaded the work, if worth anything, is ſuited to a European market, — at leaſt, enough to indemnify the publiſher. Elſe ten years nearly of my life have been thrown away indeed. I hope you will not loſe your patience with this long-winded proſing, and will excuſe this egotiſm, from the importance of the ſubject to myſelf. As to the trouble I occaſion you, I know you too well to think you will require an apology."

To this I replied from Dreſden, February 8th, 1836: —

"You ſpeak more fully about your *opus magnum*, and therefore I anſwer more fully than I did before. It muſt be a proud thought to you that you are ſo near the end of it; and yet I think you will leave it with the ſame feeling of regret with which Gibbon left his Decline and Fall. What, then, will you do to fill up the firſt void? Is it out of the queſtion that you ſhould fetch out your copy yourſelf, and get the peace of conſcience that would follow making the arrangements for its publication in perſon? I hope not. For we could eaſily manage to meet you in England two years hence, and I aſſure you, my own experience leads me to think it no very grave matter to travel with wife and children. But let us ſuppoſe you do not. What then? I remain by the ſuggeſtion in my laſt letter, that Colonel Aſpinwall is the man to take charge of it, provided neither you nor I ſhould be in London, although, if both of us were on the ſpot, he would be the man with whom I think we ſhould earlieſt adviſe in all publiſhing arrangements. His place as our Conſul-General in London is ſomething in talking to publiſhers. His character, prompt, buſineſs-like, firm, and honorable, is ſtill more. And then, if I miſtake not, he has a good deal of practice with theſe people; for he certainly makes Irving's bargains, and, I believe, has managed for —— and others. This *practice*, too, is a matter of moment."

Col. Aſpinwall.

Very fortunately for the author of Ferdinand and Iſabella, Colonel Aſpinwall was ſoon afterwards in Boſton, which is his proper home, and in whoſe neighborhood he was born. He at once undertook in the pleaſanteſt manner the pleaſant commiſſion which was offered him, and a mutual regard was the conſequence of the connection then formed, which was never afterwards broken or impaired; ſo much was there in common between the characters of the two high-minded and cultivated men.

In the autumn of 1836, one of the four printed copies, carefully corrected, was, therefore, ſent to Colonel Aſpinwall, accompanied by a letter dated October 28th, in which the author ſays: —

"With regard to the arrangements for publication, which you have been kind enough to allow me to truſt to you, I can only ſay that I ſhall abide entirely by your judgment. I certainly ſhould not diſdain any profits which might flow from it, though I believe you will do me the juſtice to think that I have been influenced by higher motives in the compoſition of the work. If I have ſucceeded, I have ſupplied an important *deſideratum* in hiſtory, but one which, I fear, has too little in it of a temporary or local intereſt to win its way into public favor very ſpeedily. But if the bookſeller can wait, I am ſure I can."

Mr. Murray and the Meſſrs. Longman decline the work.

The firſt attempts with the trade in London were not encouraging. Murray, the elder, to whom the book was at once offered, declined promptly to become its publiſher; probably without an examination of its merits, and certainly without a thorough one. Longman took more time, but came to the ſame concluſion. The author, as might have been expected, was chagrined, and, with the openneſs of his nature, ſaid ſo, in his letters both to Colonel Aſpinwall and to me.

"Murray's deciſion," he wrote to the former, "was too prompt to be final with me; but Longman has examined the matter ſo deliberately, that I am convinced there is little reaſon to ſuppoſe the book can be regarded as a profitable concern for a London publiſher. It will undoubtedly prejudice the work to go a-begging for a patron, and my ill-ſucceſs will thus acquire a diſagreeable notoriety not only there, but here, where nothing is known of my foreign negotiations. I think it beſt, therefore, to take Uncle Toby's advice on the occaſion, and ſay nothing about it to any one. For the copy in your poſſeſſion, you had beſt put it out of ſight. It will ſoon be replaced by one of the Boſton edition in a more comely garb. If you ſhould have propoſed the work before receiving this to any other perſon, I ſhall not care to hear of its refuſal from you, as it will diſguſt me with the book before it is fairly born."

Mr. Bentley undertakes to publiſh it.

Similar feelings he expreſſed even more ſtrongly two days later. But this ſtate of things was not deſtined to laſt long. Before the letter which was intended to diſcourage any further propoſition in London had reached Colonel Aſpinwall, Mr. Richard Bentley had accepted an offer of the book. A few days after learning this, the author wrote to me in a very different ſtate of mind from that in which he had written his laſt letters.

"Boſton, May 16, 1837.

"MY DEAREST FRIEND,

Letter of Mr. Preſcott on the ſubject.

"I told you in my laſt that no arrangement for the publication had been

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made in England. I was miſtaken, however, as I ſoon afterwards received a letter from Colonel Aſpinwall, informing me of one with Bentley, by which he becomes proprietor of one half of the copyright, and engages to publiſh forthwith an edition at his own coſt and riſk, and divide with me the profits. He ſays, 'It will be an object for him to get out the work in elegant ſtyle, with engravings, vignettes, &c.' This is certainly much better, conſidering the obſcurity of the author and the abſence of all temporary alluſion or intereſt in the ſubject, than I had a right to expect. My object is now attained. I ſhall bring out the book in the form I deſired, and under the moſt reſpectable auſpices on both ſides of the water, and in a way which muſt intereſt the publiſher ſo deeply as to ſecure his exertions to circulate the work. My bark will be fairly launched, and if it ſhould be doomed to encounter a ſpiteful puff or two of criticiſm, I truſt it may weather it."

Publiſhed and reviewed in the United States.

But he encountered no ſuch adverſe blaſts. Immediately after the appearance of the book at Chriſtmas, 1837, but with the imprint of 1838, a very long and able article on it by his friend Mr. Gardiner, who, as we have ſeen, had juſt aſſiſted in preparing it for the preſs, was publiſhed in the "North American Review."[2] A little later, another friend, the Rev. Mr. Greenwood, — whoſe name it is not poſſible to mention without remembering what ſorrow followed the early loſs of one whoſe genius was at once ſo brilliant and ſo tender, — wrote a review for the "Chriſtian Examiner," no leſs favorable than that of Mr. Gardiner.[3] Others followed. An excellent notice by Mr. John Pickering appeared in the "New York Review," — true, careful, and diſcriminating.[4] And the ſeries of the more elaborate American diſcuſſions was cloſed in the "Democratic Review" of the next month by Mr. Bancroft, — himſelf an hiſtorian already of no mean note, and deſtined to yet more diſtinction on both ſides of the Atlantic. Of courſe, there were many other notices in periodical publications of leſs grave pretenſions, and ſtill more in the newſpapers; for the work excited an intereſt which had not been at all foreſeen. It was read by great numbers who ſeldom looked into anything ſo ſolid and ſerious. It was talked of by all who ever talked of books. Whatever was written or ſaid about it was in one tone and temper; ſo that, as far as the United

[2] January, 1838. [3] March, 1838. [4] April, 1838.

States were concerned, it may be regarded as ſucceſsful from the moment of its appearance.

In England.

Nor did the notices which at the ſame time came from England ſhow anything but good-will towards the unknown and unheralded claimant for the higher claſs of literary honors. They were written, of courſe, by perſons who had never before heard of him, but their spirit was almoſt as kindly as if they had been dictated by perſonal friendſhip. The "Athenæum" led off with a ſhort laudatory article, which, I believe, was from the pen of Dr. Dunham, who wrote the ſummary Hiſtory of Spain and Portugal in Lardner's "Cabinet Cyclopædia."[5] An article, however, in the "Edinburgh Review," a little later, was much more ſatisfactory.[6] It was the firſt examination that the work obtained in England from one whoſe previous ſpecial knowledge of the reign of Ferdinand and Iſabella enabled him to do it thoroughly. Its author was Don Paſcual de Gayangos, a learned and accompliſhed Spaniſh gentleman, then reſident in London, who wrote the Caſtilian and the Engliſh with equal purity and elegance, and of whoſe kindly connection with Mr. Preſcott it will be neceſſary for me to ſpeak often hereafter. He made in his article on the "Ferdinand and Iſabella" a faithful and real review of the work, going over its ſeveral diviſions with care, and giving a diſtinct opinion on each. It was more truly an examination of the work, and leſs a diſſertation on the ſubject, than is common in ſuch articles, and on this account it will always have its value.

Don Paſcual de Gayangos.

To this ſucceeded in June an article in the "Quarterly Review," by an Engliſh gentleman familiar with everything Spaniſh; I mean Mr. Richard Ford, who wrote the "Handbook of Spain,"—a brilliant work, not without marks of prejudice, but full of a ſingularly minute and curious local knowledge of Spain, and of Spaniſh hiſtory and manners. His article on "Ferdinand and Iſabella"[7] is marked with the ſame characteriſtics and ſimilar prejudices. He is obviouſly a little unwilling to think that a book written with learning, judg-

Mr. R. Ford.

[5] 1838, pp. 42–44. [6] January, 1839. [7] June, 1839.

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ment, and good taſte can come from ſuch a Nazareth as the United States; but he admits it at laſt. Perhaps his reluctant teſtimony was hardly leſs gratifying to the author than one more cordial would have been.

A ſeries of articles, however, which appeared in the "Bibliothèque Univerſelle de Genève" between July, 1838, and January, 1840, — five in number, and making together above a hundred and eighty pages, — gave Mr. Preſcott himſelf more ſatisfaction than any other review of his work. And well they might, for no other review of the Ferdinand and Iſabella can be compared to it in amplitude or elaborateneſs.

Count Circourt.

It was written by Count Adolphe de Circourt, a perſon whom Lamartine has called "a living chart of human knowledge."[8]

[8] Speaking of the peculiar fitneſs of the appointment of this gentleman to the very important miſſion at the Court of Berlin, immediately after the fall of Louis Philippe, in 1848, Lamartine ſays: "Cet homme, peu connu juſques-là hors du monde ariſtocratique, littéraire, et ſavant, ſe nommait Monſ. de Circourt. Il avait ſervi ſous la Réſtauration dans la diplomatie. La révolution de Juillet l'avait rejeté dans l'iſolement et dans l'oppoſition, plus près du légitimiſme que de la démocratie. Il avait profité de ces années pour ſe livrer à des études, qui aurient abſorbé pluſieurs vies d'hommes, et qui n'étaient que des diſtractions de la ſienne. Langues, races, géographie, hiſtoire, philoſophie, voyages, conſtitutions, religions des peuples depuis l'enfance du monde juſqu'à nos jours, depuis le Thibet juſqu'aux Alpes, il avait tout incorporé en lui; tout réfléchi; tout retenu. On pouvait l'interroger sur l'univerſalité des faits ou des idées, dont se compose le monde, ſans qu'il eût beſoin, pour répondre, d'interroger d'autres livres que ſa mémoire, étendue, ſurface et profondeur immenſe des notions, dont jamais on ne rencontrait ni le fond, ni les limites, — mappemonde vivante des connaiſſances humaines, homme où tout était tête et dont la tête était à la hauteur de toutes les vérités; impartial du reſte; indifférent entre les ſyſtèmes comme un être qui ne ſerait qu'intelligence, et qui ne tiendrait à la nature humaine que par le regard et par la curioſité. Monſ. de Circourt avait épouſé une jeune femme Ruſſe, de race ariſtocratique et d'un eſprit Européen. Il tenait par elle à tout ce qu'il y avait d'éminent dans les lettres et dans les cours de l'Allemagne et du Nord. Lui-même avait réſidé à Berlin, et il ſ'y était lié avec les hommes d'état. Le Roi de Pruſſe, ſouverain lettré et libéral, l'avait honoré de quelque intimité à ſa cour. Monſ. de Circourt, ſans être républicain de cœur, était aſſez frappé des grands horizons qu'une République Françaiſe — éclоſe du génie progreſſif, et pacifique de la France nouvelle — pouvait ouvrir à l'eſprit humain, pour la ſaluer et la ſervir. Il comprenait, comme Lamartine, que la liberté avait beſoin de la paix, et que la paix était à Berlin et à Londres." — *Révolution de* 1848, Livre xi. c. 13.

I have inſerted theſe ſtriking remarks of Lamartine on Monſ. and Mad. de Circourt, becauſe they will appear hereafter as the friends of Mr. Preſcott. They will alſo be remembered by many of my readers as the intimate friends and correſpondents of De Tocqueville and Count Cavour.

It goes in the moſt thorough manner over the whole ſubject, and examines the difficult and doubtful points in the hiſtory of the period with a remarkable knowledge of the original ſources and authorities. Sometimes the reviewer differs from the author; maintaining, for inſtance, that the union of the crowns of Caſtile and Aragon was not a benefit to Spain, and that the war againſt Granada is not to be juſtified by the code of a Chriſtian civilization. And ſometimes he makes additions to the Hiſtory itſelf, as in the caſe of the conqueſt of Navarre. But whatever he ſays is ſaid in a philoſophical ſpirit, and with a generous purpoſe; and, coming in a foreign language from one who knew the author only in his book, it ſounds more like the voice of poſterity than either the American or the Engliſh reviews that were contemporary with it.

CHAPTER IX.

1838.

The Author's Feelings on the Succeſs of Ferdinand and Iſabella. — Illneſs of his Mother, and her Recovery. — Opinions in Europe concerning his Hiſtory.

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The author's view of his own ſucceſs.

PASSING over the multitude of notices that appeared concerning the "Hiſtory of Ferdinand and Iſabella," it will be pleaſant to ſee how the author himſelf felt in the firſt fluſh of his unexpected honors. I was then in Paris, and ten days after the book was publiſhed in Boſton he wrote to me as follows: —

"Boſton, Jan. 6, 1838.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"It is long ſince I have ſeen your handwriting; though only a few weeks ſince I received a moſt kind and welcome epiſtle from Anna. Your friends here ſay you are not going to hold out your four years, and I could not help thinking that the complexion of Anna's ſentiments looked rather *homeiſh*.[1] I wiſh it may prove ſo. You will, at leaſt, be ſpared, by your return, ſundry long communications from me, with a plentiful daſh of egotiſm in them.

"There is ſome excuſe for this, however, juſt now, which is a ſort of epoch in my life, — my literary life at leaſt. Their Catholic Highneſſes have juſt been uſhered into the world in three royal octavos. The bantling appeared on

[1] I went abroad, with my family, for Mrs. Ticknor's health, in 1835, intending to ſtay abroad four years, if, as her phyſicians feared, ſo much time might be neceſſary for her reſtoration. She was well in three, and we gladly came home a few months after the date of this letter.

a Chriſtmas morning, and certainly has not fallen ſtill-born, but is alive and kicking merrily. How long its life may laſt is another queſtion. Within the firſt ten days half the firſt edition of five hundred copies (for the publiſhers were afraid to riſk a larger one for our market) has been diſpoſed of, and they are now making preparations for a ſecond edition, having bought of me twelve hundred and fifty copies. The ſale, indeed, ſeems quite ridiculous, and I fancy many a poor ſoul thinks ſo by this time. Not a ſingle copy has been ſent South, — the publiſhers not chooſing to ſtrip the market while they can find ſuch demand here.

"In the mean time the book has got ſummer-puffs in plenty, and a gale to the tune of ninety pages from the old 'North American.' S—— facetiouſly remarked, that 'the article ſhould be called the fourth volume of the Hiſtory.' It was written by Gardiner, after ſeveral months' induſtrious application, — though eventually concocted in the very ſhort ſpace of ten days,[2] which has given occaſion to ſome overſights. It is an able, learned, and moſt partial review; and I doubt if more knowledge of the particular ſubject can eaſily be ſupplied by the craft on the other ſide of the water, — at leaſt without the aid of a library as germane to the matter as mine, which, I think, will not readily be met with. I feel half inclined to send you a beautiful critique from the pen of your friend Hillard, as much to my taſte as anything that has appeared. But *pudor vetat.*

Mr. Gardiner's review.

Mr. Hillard's.

"In the mean time the ſmall journals have opened quite a cry in my favor, and while one of yeſterday claims me as a Boſtonian, a Salem paper aſſerts that diſtinguiſhed honor for the witch-town. So you ſee I am experiencing the fate of the Great Obſcure, even in my own lifetime. And a clergyman told me yeſterday, he intended to make my caſe — the obſtacles I have encountered and overcome — the ſubject of a ſermon. I told him it would help to ſell the book, at all events.

Other notices.

"'Poor fellow!' — I hear you exclaim by this time, — 'his wits are actually turned by this flurry in his native village, — the Yankee Athens!' Not a whit, I aſſure you. Am I not writing to two dear friends, to whom I can talk as freely and fooliſhly as to one of my own houſehold, and who, I am ſure, will not miſunderſtand me? The effect of all this — which a boy at Dr. Gardiner's ſchool, I remember, called *fungum popularitatem* — has been rather to depreſs me, and S—— was ſaying yeſterday, that ſhe had never known me ſo out of ſpirits as ſince the book has come out. The truth is, I appreciate, more than my critics can do, the difficulty of doing juſtice to my ſubject, and the immeaſurable diſtance between me and the models with which they have been pleaſed to compare me. . . . . .

"From two things I have derived unfeigned ſatisfaction; one, the delight of my good father, who ſeems diſpoſed to ſwallow — without the requiſite allowance

[2] He had, as has been noticed, gone over the whole work before it was publiſhed, and had done it with a continual conſultation of the authorities on which its facts and ſtatements were founded. He was, therefore, completely maſter of the ſubject, and wrote with an authority that few reviewers can claim.

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of ſalt — all the good-natured things which are ſaid of the book, and the other, the hearty and active kindneſs of the few whom I have thought and now find to be my friends. I feel little doubt that the work, owing to their exertions, when it gets to the Southern cities where I am not known, will find a fair reception, — though, of courſe, I cannot expect anything like the welcome it has met here.[3] I feel relieved, however, as well as the publiſhers, from all apprehenſions that the book will burn their fingers, whatever it may do to the author's. . . . . .

"I have ſent a copy for you to Rich [London], who will forward it according to your directions. I ſuppoſe there will be no difficulty in ſending it over to Paris, if you remain there. Only adviſe him thereof. . . . . A favorable notice in a Pariſian journal of reſpectability would be worth a good deal. But, after all, my market and my reputation reſt principally with England, and if your influence can ſecure me, not a friendly, but a fair notice there, in any of the three or four leading journals, it would be the beſt thing you ever did for me, — and that is no ſmall thing to ſay. But I am aſking what you will do without aſking, if any foreigner could hope to have ſuch influence. I know that the *fiat* of criticiſm now-a-days depends quite as much on the temper and character of the reviewer as the reviewed, and, in a work filled with facts dug out of barbarous and obſolete idioms, it will be eaſy to pick flaws and ſerve them up as a ſample of the whole. But I will ſpare you further twaddle about their Catholic Highneſſes."

A little later, April 30, 1838, in his private Memoranda, after giving a detailed account of the circumſtances attending its publication, the contracts for printing, and the printing itſelf, — all which he thus laid up for future uſe, — he goes on: —

The author's view of the reſults.

"Well, now for the reſult in America and England thus far. My work appeared here on the 25th of December, 1837. Its birth had been prepared for by the favorable opinions, *en avance*, of the few friends who in its progreſs through the preſs had ſeen it. It was corrected previouſly as to ſtyle, &c., by my friend Gardiner, who beſtowed ſome weeks, and I may ſay months, on its careful reviſion, and who ſuggeſted many important alterations in the form. Simonds[4] had previouſly ſuggeſted throwing the introductory "Section 2" on Aragon into its preſent place, it firſt having occupied the place after Chapter III. The work was indefatigably corrected, and the references moſt elaborately and ſyſtematically reviſed by Folſom. . . . . .

"From the time of its appearance to the preſent date, it has been the ſubject

[3] See *ante*, p. 106.

[4] Mr. Henry C. Simonds, who was Mr. Preſcott's reader and ſecretary for four years, — an accompliſhed young ſcholar, for whom he felt a very ſincere regard. Mr. Simonds died two years after this date, in 1840.

of notices, more or leſs elaborate, in the principal reviews and periodicals of the country, and in the maſs of criticiſm I have not met with one unkind, or ſarcaſtic, or cenſorious ſentence; and my critics have been of all ſorts, from ſtiff conſervatives to levelling loco-focos. Much of all this ſucceſs is to be attributed to the influence and exertions of perſonal friends, — much to the beautiful dreſs and mechanical execution of the book, — and much to the novelty, in our country, of a work of reſearch in various foreign languages. The topics, too, though not connected with the times, have novelty and importance in them. Whatever is the cauſe, the book has found a degree of favor not dreamed of by me certainly, nor by its warmeſt friends. It will, I have reaſon to hope, ſecure me an honeſt fame, and — what never entered into my imagination in writing it — put, in the long run, ſome money in my pocket.

"In Europe things wear alſo a very auſpicious aſpect ſo far. The weekly periodicals — the leſſer lights of criticiſm — contain the moſt ample commendations on the book; ſeveral of the articles being written with ſpirit and beauty. How extenſively the *trade* winds may have helped me along, I cannot ſay. But ſo far the courſe has been ſmooth and rapid. Bentley ſpeaks to my friends in extravagant terms of the book, and ſtates that nearly half the edition, which was of ſeven hundred and fifty copies, had been ſold by the end of March.[5] In France, thanks to my friend Ticknor, it has been put into the hands of the principal *ſavans* in the Caſtilian. Copies have alſo been ſent to ſome eminent ſcholars in Germany. Thus far, therefore, we run before the wind."

I will not refuſe myſelf the pleaſure of inſerting what I had already written to him from Paris, February 20th, when, the London copy he had ſent me having failed to come to hand, I had read the firſt volume of "Ferdinand and Iſabella" in an American copy which had reached a friend in that city: —

"I have got hold of the firſt volume, and may, perchance, have the luck to ſee the others. It has ſatisfied all my expectations, and when I tell you that I wrote to Colonel Aſpinwall from Berlin, nearly two years ago, placing you quite at the ſide of Irving, you will underſtand how I feel about it. I ſpoke conſcientiouſly when I wrote to Aſpinwall, and I do the ſame now. You have written a book that will not be forgotten. The Dedication to your father was entirely anticipated by me, — its tone and its ſpirit, — everything except its beautiful words. He is happy to have received a tribute ſo true and ſo due, — ſo worthy of him and ſo rarely to be had of any."

But in the midſt of the happineſs which his ſucceſs naturally

[5] Mr. Bentley had requeſted me to tell Mr. Preſcott that he was proud of having publiſhed ſuch a book, and that he thought it would prove the beſt he had ever brought out.

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Illneſs of his mother.

produced, trouble came upon him. The family had gone, as uſual, to Pepperell in the early ſummer of 1838, when a ſevere illneſs of his mother brought them ſuddenly back to town, and kept them there above two months, at the end of which ſhe was happily reſtored, or nearly ſo.

"Moved from Pepperell," he ſays in his private memoranda, "prematurely, June 26th, on account of the diſtreſſing illneſs of my mother, which ſtill, July 16th, detains us in this peſtilent place, amidſt heats which would do credit to the tropics. The ſame cauſe has prevented me from giving nearly as many hours to my ſtudies as I ſhould otherwiſe have done, being in rather an induſtrious mood. My mother's health, apparently improving, may permit me to do this.

But the next notice, July 27th, is more comfortable: —

"Been a month now in Boſton, which I find more tolerable than at firſt. The heat has much abated, and, indeed, a ſummer reſidence here has many alleviations. But I ſhould never prefer it to a ſummer at Nahant. Have received an Engliſh copy of 'Ferdinand and Iſabella.' Better paper, blacker ink, more ſhowy pages, but, on the whole, not ſo good type, and, as the printer did not receive the corrections in ſeaſon for the laſt three chapters, there are many verbal inaccuracies. The plates are good, — the portrait of Columbus exquiſite, and about as much like him, I ſuppoſe, as any other. On the whole, Bentley has done fairly by the work. My friend Ticknor brings me home a very favorable report of the opinions expreſſed of the work by French and Engliſh ſcholars. If this report is not colored by his own friendſhip, the book will take ſome rank on the other ſide of the water."

As he intimates, I was juſt then returned from Europe after an abſence of three years. He met me at the cars on my arrival from New York, where I had landed; but his countenance was ſad and troubled with the dangerous illneſs of his mother, then at its height. I ſaw him, however, daily, and talked with him in the freeſt and fulleſt manner about his literary poſition and proſpects; giving him, without exaggeration, an account of the opinions held in England and France concerning his work, which he could not chooſe but find very gratifying.

Opinions in France and England on the "Ferdinand and Iſabella."

I had, in fact, received the book itſelf before I left Paris, and had given copies of it to M. Guizot, M. Mignet, Count Adolphe de Circourt, and M. Charles Fauriel. The laſt

three, as well as ſome other friends, had expreſſed to me their high eſtimation of it, in terms very little meaſured, which were, in their ſubſtance, repeated to me later by M. Guizot, when he had had leiſure to read it. Four perſons better qualified to judge the merits of ſuch a work could not, I ſuppoſe, have then been found in France, and the opinion of Count Circourt, ſet forth in the learned and admirable review already alluded to, would, I think, ſubſequently have been accepted by any one of them as ſubſtantially his own.

In England, where I paſſed the ſpring and early ſummer, I found the ſame judgment was pronounced and pronouncing. At Holland Houſe, then the higheſt tribunal in London on the ſubject of Spaniſh hiſtory and literature, Lord Holland and Mr. John Allen, who were both juſt finiſhing its peruſal, did not conceal from me the high value they placed upon it; Mr. Allen telling me that he regarded the introductory ſections on the conſtitutional hiſtory of Aragon and Caſtile — which, it will be remembered, were three times written over, and twice printed, before they were finally given to the preſs for publication — as poſſeſſing a very high merit as ſtateſmanlike diſcuſſions, and as better than anything elſe extant on the ſame ſubject.[6] Southey, whom I afterwards ſaw at Keſwick, and from whoſe judgment on anything relating to Spaniſh hiſtory few would venture to appeal, volunteered to me an opinion no leſs deciſive.[7]

The more important Reviews had not yet ſpoken; but, remembering the wiſh expreſſed by my friend in a letter to me already cited, — though, as he intimated, not needing ſuch an

[6] I ought, perhaps, to add here, that, by common conſent of the ſcholars of the time, the opinion of no man in England, on ſuch a point, would have been placed before Mr. Allen's.

[7] Mr. Preſcott was eſpecially gratified with this opinion of Mr. Southey, becauſe he had much feared that the rejection of his book by the Longmans was the reſult of advice from Southey, whoſe publiſhers they were, and who was often conſulted by them reſpecting the publication of ſuch works. But the Longmans declined it, as Southey himſelf told me, only becauſe they did not, at the time, wiſh to increaſe their liſt of new publications. The ſame cauſe, I ſubſequently underſtood, had governed the deciſion of Murray, who did not even give the book to anybody for a judgment on its merits.

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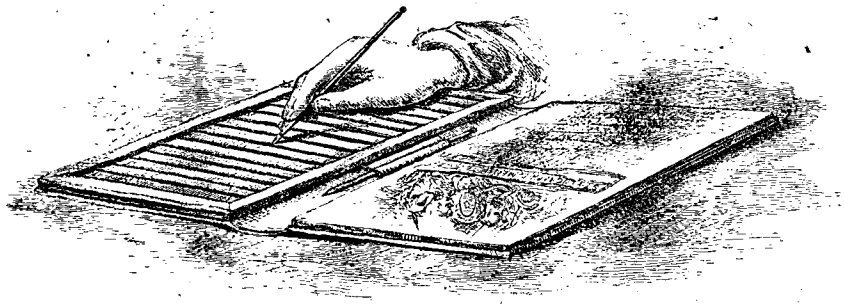
expreſſion, — I made, through the ready kindneſs of Lord Holland, arrangements with Mr. McVey Napier, the editor of the "Edinburgh Review," for the article in that journal by Don Paſcual de Gayangos, of which an account has already been given. Mr. Lockhart, the Ariſtarch of the "Quarterly Review," had not read the book when I ſpoke to him about it, but he told me he had heard from good authority that "it was one that would laſt"; and the reſult of his own examination of it was Mr. Ford's review, Mr. Ford himſelf having been, I ſuppoſe, the authority referred to. Mr. Hallam, to whom I ſent a copy in the author's name, acknowledged its receipt in a manner the moſt gratifying, and ſo did Mr. Milman; both of theſe diſtinguiſhed and admirable men becoming afterwards perſonally attached to Mr. Preſcott, and correſponding with him, from time to time, until his death. Theſe, and ſome others like them, were the ſuffrages that I bore to my friend on my return home early in July, and to which, in the paſſages I have cited from his Memoranda, he alludes. They were all of one temper and in one tone. I had heard of no others, and had, therefore, no others to give him. At home its ſucceſs, I found, was already fully aſſured. As Dr. Channing had told him, "Your book has been received here with acclamation." [8]

[8] A year after its publication, the author records very naturally, among his private Memoranda: "Dec. 25, 1838. The anniverſary of the appearance of their Catholic Highneſſes Ferdinand and Iſabella, God bleſs them! What would I have given laſt year to know they would have run off ſo glibly?" I think about twenty-eight hundred copies had been ſold in the United States when this record was made, — only a foretaſte of the ſubſequent ſucceſs. On the 1ſt of January, 1860, the aggregate ſales in the United States and England amounted to ſeventeen thouſand ſeven hundred and thirty-one.



CHAPTER X.

1837 – 1838.

Mr. Preſcott's Character at this Period. — Effect of his Infirmity of Sight in forming it. — Noctograph. — Diſtribution of his Day. — Contrivances for Regulating the Light in his Room. — Premature Decay of Sight. — Exact Syſtem of Exerciſe and Life generally. — Firm Will in carrying it out.

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Mr. Preſcott's character.

WHEN the Ferdinand and Iſabella was publiſhed, in the winter of 1837 – 8, its author was nearly forty-two years old. His character, ſome of whoſe traits had been prominent from childhood, while others had been ſlowly developed, was fully formed. His habits were ſettled for life. He had a perfectly well-defined individuality, as everybody knew who knew anything about his occupations and ways.

Much of what went to conſtitute this individuality was the reſult of his infirmity of ſight, and of the unceaſing ſtruggle he had made to overcome the difficulties it entailed upon him. For, as we ſhall ſee hereafter, the thought of this

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infirmity, and of the embarraſſments it brought with it, was ever before him. It colored, and in many reſpects it controlled, his whole life.

First grave fears about his eyesight.

The violent inflammation that reſulted from the fierce attack of rheumatiſm in the early months of 1815 firſt ſtartled him, I think, with the apprehenſion that he might poſſibly be deprived of ſight altogether, and that thus his future years would be left in "total eclipſe, without all hope of day." But from this dreary apprehenſion, his recovery, ſlow and partial as it was, and the buoyant ſpirits that entered ſo largely into his conſtitution, at laſt relieved him. He even, from time to time, as the diſeaſe fluctuated to and fro, had hopes of an entire reſtoration of his ſight.

But, before long, he began to judge things more exactly as they were, and ſaw plainly that anything like a full recovery of his ſight was improbable, if not impoſſible. He turned his thoughts, therefore, to the reſources that would ſtill remain to him. The proſpect was by no means a pleaſant one, but he looked at it ſteadily and calmly. All thought of the profeſſion which had long been ſo tempting to him he gave up. He ſaw that he could never fulfil its duties. But intellectual occupation he could not give up. It was a gratification and reſource which his nature demanded, and would not be refuſed. The difficulty was to find out how it could be obtained. During the three months of his confinement in total darkneſs at St. Michael's, he firſt began to diſcipline his thoughts to ſuch orderly compoſition in his memory as he might have written down on paper, if his ſight had permitted it. "I have cheated," he ſays, in a letter to his family written at the end of that diſcouraging period,— "I have cheated many a moment of tedium by compoſitions which were ſoon baniſhed from my mind for want of an amanuenſis."

Gives up a profeſſion.

Among theſe compoſitions was a Latin ode to his friend Gardiner, which was prepared wholly without books, but which, though now loſt, like the reſt of his Latin verſes, he

Unwritten compoſitions.

repeated years afterwards to his Club, who did not fail to think it good. It is evident, however, that, for a conſiderable time, he reſorted to ſuch mental occupations and exerciſes rather as an amuſement than as anything more ſerious. Nor did he at firſt go far with them even as a light and tranſient relief from idleneſs; for, though he never gave them up altogether, and though they at laſt became a very important element in his ſucceſs as an author, he ſoon found an agreeable ſubſtitute for them, at leaſt ſo far as his immediate, every-day wants were concerned.

Noctograph.

The ſubſtitute to which I refer, but which itſelf implied much previous reflection and thought upon what he ſhould commit to paper, was an apparatus to enable the blind to write. He heard of it in London during his firſt reſidence there in the ſummer of 1816. A lady, at whoſe houſe he viſited frequently, and who became intereſted in his misfortune, "told him," as he ſays in a letter to his mother, "of a newly invented machine by which blind people are enabled to write. I have," he adds, "before been indebted to Mrs. Delafield for an ingenious candle-ſcreen. If this machine can be procured, you will be ſure to feel the effects of it."

He obtained it at once; but he did not uſe it until nearly a month afterwards, when, on the 24th of Auguſt, at Paris, he wrote home his firſt letter with it, ſaying, "It is a very happy invention for me." And ſuch it certainly proved to be, for he never ceaſed to uſe it from that day; nor does it now ſeem poſſible that, without the facilities it afforded him, he ever would have ventured to undertake any of the works which have made his name what it is.[1]

Deſcription of the noctograph.

The machine — if machine it can properly be called — is an apparatus invented by one of the well-known Wedgewood family, and is very ſimple both in its ſtructure and uſe. It

[1] This very apparatus, the firſt he ever had, is ſtill extant. Indeed, he never poſſeſſed but one other; and that was its exact duplicate. The oldeſt is nearly uſed up. But, although he never had more than two for himſelf, he cauſed others to be made for perſons ſuffering under infirmities like his own, — not infrequently ſending them to thoſe who were known to him only as needing ſuch help.

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looks, as it lies folded up on the table, like a clumſy portfolio, bound in morocco, and meaſures about ten inches by nine when unopened. Sixteen ſtout parallel braſs wires faſtened on the right-hand ſide into a frame of the ſame ſize with the cover, much like the frame of a ſchool-boy's ſlate, and croſſing it from ſide to ſide, mark the number of lines that can be written on a page, and guide the hand in its blind motions. This framework of wires is folded down upon a ſheet of paper thoroughly impregnated with a black ſubſtance, eſpecially on its under ſurface, beneath which lies the ſheet of common paper that is to receive the writing. There are thus, when it is in uſe, three layers on the right-hand ſide of the opened apparatus; viz. the wires, the blackened ſheet of paper, and the white ſheet, — all lying ſucceſſively in contact with each other, the two that are underneath being held firmly in their places by the framework of wires which is uppermoſt. The whole apparatus is called a *noctograph*.

Mode of uſing it.

When it has been adjuſted, as above deſcribed, the perſon uſing it writes with an ivory ſtyle, or with a ſtyle made of ſome harder ſubſtance, like agate, on the upper ſurface of the blackened paper, which, wherever the ſtyle preſſes on it, tranſfers the coloring matter of its under ſurface to the white paper beneath it, — the writing thus produced looking much like that done with a common black-lead pencil.

Difficulty of uſing it.

The chief difficulty in the uſe of ſuch an apparatus is obvious. The perſon employing it never looks upon his work; never ſees one of the marks he is making. He truſts wholly to the wires for the direction of his hand. He makes his letters and words only from mechanical habit. He muſt, therefore, write ſtraight forward, without any opportunity for correction, however groſs may be the miſtakes he has made, or however ſure he may be that he has made them; for, if he were to go back in order to correct an error, he would only make his page ſtill more confuſed, and probably render it quite illegible. When, therefore, he has made a miſtake, great or ſmall, all he can do is to go forward, and rewrite further on

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Facsimile of the original manuscript of Mr. Prescott's Conquest of Mexico
Book 1 chapter III. paragraph beginning "The tidings soon spread from man to man" &c.

~~As~~ The ~~dreadful~~ ~~tidings~~
tidings soon spread from man to man, and
in course was the dreadful import
comprehended. Upon a day of dinar arose
what for a moment drawn all the noise
of conflict. All means of retreat was
very cut off. ~~The~~ Scarcely ~~any~~ hope was
left. The only hope was [illegible] in such

the word or phraſe he firſt intended to write, rarely attempting to ſtrike out what was wrong, or to inſert, in its proper place, anything that may have been omitted. It is plain, therefore, that the perſon who reſorts to this apparatus as a ſubſtitute for ſight ought previouſly to prepare and ſettle in his memory what he wiſhes to write, ſo as to make as few miſtakes as poſſible. With the beſt care, his manuſcript will not be very legible. Without it, he may be ſure it can hardly be deciphered at all.

Boldneſs in undertaking to become a writer of hiſtory.

That Mr. Preſcott, under his diſheartening infirmities, — I refer not only to his imperfect ſight, but to the rheumatiſm from which he was ſeldom wholly free, — ſhould, at the age of five-and-twenty or thirty, with no help but this ſimple apparatus, have aſpired to the character of an hiſtorian dealing with events that happened in times and countries far diſtant from his own, and that are recorded chiefly in foreign languages and by authors whoſe conflicting teſtimony was often to be reconciled by laborious compariſon, is a remarkable fact in literary hiſtory. It is a problem the ſolution of which was, I believe, never before undertaken; certainly never before accompliſhed. Nor do I conceive that he himſelf could have accompliſhed it, unleſs to his uncommon intellectual gifts had been added great animal ſpirits, a ſtrong, perſiſtent will, and a moral courage which was to be daunted by no obſtacle that he might deem it poſſible to remove by almoſt any amount of effort.[2]

That he was not inſenſible to the difficulties of his undertaking, we have partly ſeen, as we have witneſſed how his hopes fluctuated while he was ſtruggling through the arrangements for beginning to write his "Ferdinand and Iſabella," and, in fact,

[2] The caſe of Thierry — the neareſt known to me — was different. His great work, "Hiſtoire de la Conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands," was written before he became blind. What he publiſhed afterward was dictated, — wonderful, indeed, all of it, but eſpecially all that relates to what he did for the commiſſion of the government concerning the Tiers État, to be found in that grand collection of "Documents inédits ſur l'Hiſtoire de France," begun under the auſpices and influence of M. Guizot, when he was miniſter of Louis-Philippe.

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during the whole period of its compoſition. But he ſhowed the ſame character, the ſame fertility of reſource, every day of his life, and provided, both by forecaſt and ſelf-ſacrifice, againſt the embarraſſments of his condition as they ſucceſſively preſented themſelves.

Conſtant anxiety about his eye-ſight.

The firſt thing to be done, and the thing always to be repeated day by day, was to ſtrengthen, as much as poſſible, what remained of his ſight, and, at any rate, to do nothing that ſhould tend to exhauſt its impaired powers. In 1821, when he was ſtill not without ſome hope of its recovery, he made this memorandum. "I will make it my principal purpoſe to reſtore my eye to its primitive vigor, and will do nothing habitually that can ſeriouſly injure it." To this end he regulated his life with an exactneſs that I have never known equalled. Eſpecially in whatever related to the daily diſtribution of his time, whether in regard to his intellectual labors, to his ſocial enjoyments, or to the care of his phyſical powers, including his diet, he was ſeverely exact, — managing himſelf, indeed, in this laſt reſpect, under the general directions of his wiſe medical adviſer, Dr. Jackſon, but carrying out theſe directions with an ingenuity and fidelity all his own.

Life regulated with reference to it.

Riſes early.

He was an early riſer, although it was a great effort for him to be ſuch. From boyhood it ſeemed to be contrary to his nature to get up betimes in the morning. He was, therefore, always awaked, and after ſilently, and ſometimes ſlowly and with reluctance, counting twenty, ſo as fairly to arouſe himſelf, he reſolutely ſprang out of bed; or, if he failed, he paid a forfeit, as a memento of his weakneſs, to the ſervant who had knocked at his chamber-door.[3] His failures, however, were rare. When he was called, he was told the ſtate of the weather and of the thermometer. This was important, as he was compelled by his rheumatiſm — almoſt always preſent, and, when not

[3] When he was a bachelor, the ſervant, after waiting a certain number of minutes at the door without receiving an anſwer, went in and took away the bed-clothes. This was, at that period, the office of faithful Nathan Webſter, who was remembered kindly in Mr. Preſcott's will, and who was for nearly thirty years in the family, a true and valued friend of all its members.

preſent, always apprehended — to regulate his dreſs with care; and, finding it difficult to do ſo in any other way, he cauſed each of its heavier external portions to be marked by his tailor with the number of ounces it weighed, and then put them on according to the temperature, ſure that their weight would indicate the meaſure of warmth and protection they would afford.[4]

Exerciſe before breakfaſt.

As ſoon as he was dreſſed, he took his early exerciſe in the open air. This, for many years, was done on horſeback, and, as he loved a ſpirited horſe and was often thinking more of his intellectual purſuits than of anything elſe while he was riding, he ſometimes caught a fall. But he was a good rider, and was ſorry to give up this form of exerciſe and reſort to walking or driving, as he did, by order of his phyſician, in the laſt dozen years of his life. No weather, except a ſevere ſtorm, prevented him at any period from thus, as he called it, "winding himſelf up." Even in the coldeſt of our very cold winter mornings, it was his habit, ſo long as he could ride, to ſee the ſun riſe on a particular ſpot three or four miles from town. In a letter to Mrs. Ticknor, who was then in Germany, dated March, 1836, — at the end of a winter memorable for its extreme ſeverity, — he ſays, "You will give me credit for ſome ſpunk when I tell you that I have not been frightened by the cold a ſingle morning from a ride on horſeback to Jamaica Plain and back again before breakfaſt. My mark has been to ſee the ſun riſe by Mr. Greene's ſchool, if you remember where that is." When the rides here referred to were taken, the thermometer was often below zero of Fahrenheit.

Light breakfaſt.

On his return home, after adjuſting his dreſs anew, with reference to the temperature within doors, he ſat down, almoſt always in a very gay humor, to a moderate and even ſpare breakfaſt, — a meal he much liked, becauſe, as he ſaid, he

[4] As in the caſe of the uſe of wine, hereafter to be noticed, he made, from year to year, the moſt minute memoranda about the uſe of clothes, finding it neceſſary to be exact on account of the rheumatiſm which, beſides almoſt conſtantly infeſting his limbs, always affected his ſight when it became ſevere.

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could then have his family with him in a quiet way, and so begin the day happily. From the breakfast-table he went at once to his study. There, while busied with what remained of his toilet, or with the needful arrangements for his regular occupations, Mrs. Prescott read to him, generally from the morning papers, but sometimes from the current literature of the day. At a fixed hour — seldom later than ten — his reader or secretary came. In this, as in everything, he required punctuality; but he noted tardiness only by looking significantly at his watch; for it is the testimony of all his surviving secretaries, that he never spoke a severe word to either of them in the many years of their familiar intercourse.

Forenoon's work.

When they had met in the study, there was no thought but of active work for about three hours.[5] His infirmities, however, were always present to warn him how cautiously it must be done, and he was extremely ingenious in the means he devised for doing it without increasing them. The shades and shutters for regulating the exact amount of light which should be admitted; his own position relatively to its direct rays, and to those that were reflected from surrounding objects; the adaptation of his dress and of the temperature of the room to his rheumatic affections; and the different contrivances for taking notes from the books that were read to him, and for impressing on his memory, with the least possible use of his sight, such portions of each as were needful for his immediate purpose, — were all of them the result of painstaking experiments, skilfully and patiently made. But their ingenuity and adaptation were less remarkable than the conscientious consistency with which they were employed from day to day for forty years.

[5] I speak here of the time during which he was busy with his Histories. In the intervals between them, as, for instance, between the "Ferdinand and Isabella" and the "Mexico," between the "Mexico" and "Peru," &c., his habits were very different. At these periods he indulged, sometimes for many months, in a great deal of light, miscellaneous reading, which he used to call "literary loafing." This he thought not only agreeable, but refreshing and useful; though sometimes he complained bitterly of himself for carrying his indulgences of this sort too far.

His eye never to be much depended upon.

In relation to all ſuch arrangements, two circumſtances ſhould be noted.

The firſt is, that the reſources of his eye were always very ſmall and uncertain, except for a few years, beginning in 1840, when, from his long-continued prudence or from ſome inſcrutable cauſe, there ſeemed to be either an increaſe of ſtrength in the organ, or elſe ſuch a diminution of its ſenſibility as enabled him to uſe it more, though its ſtrength might really be diminiſhed.

Thus, for inſtance, he was able to uſe his eye very little in the preparation of the "Ferdinand and Iſabella," not looking into a book ſometimes for weeks and even months together, and yet occaſionally he could read ſeveral hours in a day if he carefully divided the whole into ſhort portions, ſo as to avoid fatigue. While engaged in the compoſition of the "Conqueſt of Mexico," on the contrary, he was able to read with conſiderable regularity, and ſo he was while working on the "Conqueſt of Peru," though, on the whole, with leſs.[6]

Premature decay of its ſight.

But he had, during nearly all this time, another difficulty to encounter. There had come on prematurely that gradual decay of the eye which is the conſequence of advancing years, and for which the common remedy is ſpectacles. Even when he was uſing what remained to him of ſight on the "Conqueſt of Mexico" with a freedom which not a little animated him in his purſuits, he perceived this diſcouraging change. In July, 1841, he ſays: "My eye, for ſome days,

[6] How uncertain was the ſtate of his eye, even when it was ſtrongeſt, may be ſeen from memoranda made at different times within leſs than two years of each other. The firſt is in January, 1829, when he was full of grateful feelings for an unexpected increaſe of his powers of ſight. "By the bleſſing of Heaven," he ſays, "I have been enabled to have the free uſe of my eye in the daytime during the laſt weeks, without the exception of a ſingle day, although deprived, for nearly a fortnight, of my accuſtomed exerciſe. I hope I have not abuſed this great privilege." But this condition of things did not laſt long. Great fluctuations followed. In Auguſt and September he was much diſcouraged by ſevere inflammations; and in October, 1830, when he had been ſlowly writing the "Ferdinand and Iſabella" for about a year, his ſight for a time became ſo much impaired that he was brought — I uſe his own words — "ſeriouſly to conſider what ſteps he ſhould take in relation to that work, if his ſight ſhould fail him altogether."

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feels dim. 'I gueſs and fear,' as Burns ſays." And in June, 1842, when our families were ſpending together at Lebanon Springs a few days which he has recorded as otherwiſe very happy, he ſpoke to me more than once in a tone of abſolute grief, that he ſhould never again enjoy the magnificent ſpectacle of the ſtarry heavens. To this ſad deprivation he, in fact, alludes himſelf in his Memoranda of that period, where, in relation to his eyes, he ſays: "I find a miſty veil increaſing over them, quite annoying when reading. The other evening B—— ſaid: 'How beautiful the heavens are with ſo many ſtars!' I could hardly ſee two. It made me ſad."

Spectacles, however, although they brought their appropriate relief, brought alſo an inevitable inconvenience. They fatigued his eye. He could uſe it, therefore, leſs and leſs, or if he uſed it at all, beyond a nicely adjuſted amount, the exceſs was followed by a ſort of irritability, weakneſs, and pain in the organ which he had not felt for many years. This went on increaſing with ſad regularity. But he knew that it was inevitable, and ſubmitted to it patiently. In the latter part of his life he was able to uſe his eye very little indeed for the purpoſe of reading, — in the laſt year, hardly at all. Even in ſeveral of the years preceding, he uſed it only thirty-five minutes in each day, divided exactly by the watch into portions of five minutes each, with at leaſt half an hour between, and always ſtopping the moment pain was felt, even if it were felt at the firſt inſtant of opening the book. I doubt whether a more perſiſtent, conſcientious care was ever taken of an impaired phyſical power. Indeed, I do not ſee how it could have been made more thorough. But all care was unavailing, and he at laſt knew that it was ſo. The decay could not be arreſted. He ſpoke of it rarely, but when he perceived that in the evening twilight he could no longer walk about the ſtreets that were familiar to him with his accuſtomed aſſurance, he felt it deeply. Still he perſevered, and was as watchful of what remained of his ſight as if his hopes of its reſtoration had continued unchecked. Indeed, I think he always truſted

At laſt can hardly uſe it at all.

that he was ſaving ſomething by his anxious care; he always believed that great prudence on one day would enable him to do a little more work on the next than he ſhould be able to do without ſo much caution.

Increaſed demand for light.

The other circumſtance that ſhould be noticed in relation to the arrangements for his purſuits is, the continually increaſed amount of light he was obliged to uſe, and which he could uſe without apparent injury.

In Bedford Street, where he firſt began his experiments, he could, from the extreme ſenſitiveneſs of his eye, bear very little light. But, even before he left that quiet old mansion, he cut out a new window in his working-room, arranging it ſo that the light ſhould fall more ſtrongly and more excluſively upon the book he might be uſing. This did very well for a time. But when he removed to Beacon Street, the room he built expreſſly for his own uſe contained ſix contiguous windows; two of which, though large, were glazed each with a ſingle ſheet of the fineſt plate-glaſs, nicely protected by ſeveral curtains of delicate fabric and of a light-blue color, one or more of which could be drawn up over each window to temper the light, while the whole light that was admitted through any one opening could be excluded by ſolid wooden ſhutters. At firſt, though much light was commonly uſed, theſe appliances for diminiſhing it were all more or leſs required. But, gradually, one after another of them was given up, and, at laſt, I obſerved that none was found important. He needed and uſed all the light he could get.

The change was a ſad one, and he did not like to allude to it. But during the laſt year of his life, after the firſt ſlight acceſs of paralyſis, which much diſturbed the organ for a time and rendered its action very irregular, he ſpoke plainly to me. He ſaid he muſt ſoon ceaſe to uſe his eye for any purpoſe of ſtudy, but fondly truſted that he ſhould always be able to recognize the features of his friends, and ſhould never become a burden to thoſe he loved by needing to be led about. His hopes were, indeed, fulfilled, but not without the ſorrow of

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all. The day before his ſudden death he walked the ſtreets as freely as he had done for years.

Always anxious to ſave his eye.

Still, whatever may have been the condition of his eye at any period, — from the fierce attack of 1815 to the very end of his life, — it was always a paramount ſubject of anxiety with him. He never ceaſed to think of it, and to regulate the hours, and almoſt the minutes, of his daily life by it. Even in its beſt eſtate he felt that it muſt be ſpared; in its worſt, he was anxious to ſave ſomething by care and abſtinence. He ſaid, "he reckoned time by eyeſight, as diſtances on railroads are reckoned by hours."

One thing in this connection may be noted as remarkable. He knew that, if he would give up literary labor altogether, his eye would be better at once, and would laſt longer. His phyſicians all told him ſo, and their opinion was rendered certain by his own experience; for whenever he ceaſed to work for ſome time, as during a viſit to New York in 1842 and a viſit to Europe in 1850, — in ſhort, whenever he took a journey or indulged himſelf in holidays of ſuch a ſort as prevented him from looking into books at all or thinking much about them, — his general health immediately became more vigorous than might have been expected from a relief ſo tranſient, and his ſight was always improved; ſometimes materially improved. But he would not pay the price. He preferred to ſubmit, if it ſhould be inevitable, to the penalty of ultimate blindneſs, rather than give up his literary purſuits.

He never liked to work more than three hours conſecutively.

Exerciſe at noon.

At one o'clock, therefore, he took a walk of about two miles, and attended to any little buſineſs abroad that was incumbent on him, coming home generally refreſhed and exhilarated, and

Dinner.

ready to lounge a little and goſſip. Dinner followed, for the greater part of his life about three o'clock, although, during a few years, he dined in winter at five or ſix, which he preferred, and which he gave up only becauſe his health demanded the change. In the ſummer he always dined early, ſo as to have the late afternoon for driving and exerciſe during our hot ſeaſon.

He enjoyed the pleaſures of the table, and even its luxuries, more than moſt men. But he reſtricted himſelf carefully in the uſe of them, adjuſting everything with reference to its effect on the power of uſing his eye immediately afterwards, and eſpecially on his power of uſing it the next day. Occaſional indulgence when dining out or with friends at home he found uſeful, or at leaſt not injurious, and was encouraged in it by his medical counſel. But he dined abroad, as he did everything of the ſort, at regulated intervals, and not only determined beforehand in what he ſhould deviate from his ſettled habits, but often made a record of the reſult for his future government.

Pleaſures of the table.

The moſt embarraſſing queſtion, however, as to diet, regarded the uſe of wine, which, if at firſt it ſometimes ſeemed to be followed by bad conſequences, was yet, on the whole, found uſeful, and was preſcribed to him. To make everything certain, and ſettle the preciſe point to which he ſhould go, he inſtituted a ſeries of experiments, and between March, 1818, and November, 1820, — a period of two years and nine months, — he recorded the exact quantity of wine that he took every day, except the few days when he entirely abſtained. It was Sherry or Madeira. In the great majority of caſes — four fifths, I ſhould think — it ranged from one to two glaſſes, but went up ſometimes to four or five, and even to ſix. He ſettled, at laſt, upon two or two and a half as the quantity beſt ſuited to his caſe, and perſevered in this as his daily habit, until the laſt year of his life, during which a peculiar regimen was impoſed upon him from the peculiar circumſtances of his health. In all this I wiſh to be underſtood that he was rigorous with himſelf, — much more ſo than perſons thought who ſaw him only when he was dining with friends, and when, but equally upon ſyſtem and principle, he was much more free.

Careful uſe of wine.

He generally ſmoked a ſingle weak cigar after dinner, and liſtened at the ſame time to light reading from Mrs. Preſcott. A walk of two miles — more or leſs — followed; but always enough, after the habit of riding was given up, to make the full amount of ſix miles' walking for the day's exerciſe, and

Smokes moderately.

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then, between five and eight, he took a cup of tea, and had his reader with him for work two hours more.

Evening.

The labors of the day were now definitively ended. He came down from his ſtudy to his library, and either ſat there or walked about while Mrs. Preſcott read to him from ſome amuſing book, generally a novel, and, above all other novels, thoſe of Scott and Miſs Edgeworth. In all this he took great ſolace. He enjoyed the room as well as the reading, and, as he moved about, would often ſtop before the books, — eſpecially his favorite books, — and be ſure that they were all in their proper places, drawn up exactly to the front of their reſpective ſhelves, like ſoldiers on a dreſs-parade, — ſometimes ſpeaking of them, and almoſt to them, as if they were perſonal friends.

Goes to bed early.

At half paſt ten, having firſt taken nearly another glaſs of wine, he went to bed, fell aſleep quickly, and ſlept ſoundly and well. Suppers he early gave up, although they were a form of ſocial intercourſe much liked in his father's houſe, and common thirty or forty years ago in the circle to which he belonged. Beſides all other reaſons againſt them, he found that the lights commonly on the table ſhot their horizontal rays ſo as to injure his ſuffering organ. Larger evening parties, which were not ſo liable to this objection, he liked rather for their ſocial influences than for the pleaſure they gave him; but he was ſeen in them to the laſt, though rarely and only for a ſhort time in each. Earlier in life, when he enjoyed them more and ſtayed later, he would, in the coldeſt winter nights, after going home, run up and down on a plank walk, ſo arranged in the garden of the Bedford-Street houſe that he could do it with his eyes ſhut, for twenty minutes or more, in order that his ſyſtem might be refreſhed, and his ſight invigorated, for the next morning's work.[7] Later, unhappily, this was not needful. His eye had loſt the ſenſibility that gave its value to ſuch a habit.

[7] Some perſons may think this to have been a fancy of my friend, or an over-nice eſtimate of the value of the open air. But others have found the ſame benefit who needed it leſs. Sir Charles Bell ſays, in his journal, that he uſed to ſit in the open air a great deal, and read or draw, becauſe, *on the following day*, he found himſelf ſo much better able to work. Some of the beſt paſſages in his great treatiſes were, he ſays, written under theſe circumſtances.

Exercise uniform and exact.

In his exercise, at all its assigned hours, he was faithful and exact. If a violent storm prevented him from going out, or if the bright snow on sunny days in winter rendered it dangerous for him to expose his eye to its brilliant reflection, he would dress himself as for the street and walk vigorously about the colder parts of the house, or he would saw and chop fire-wood, under cover, being, in the latter case, read to all the while.

Pain in motion.

The result he sought, and generally obtained, by these efforts was not, however, always to be had without suffering. The first mile or two of his walk often cost him pain — sometimes sharp pain — in consequence of the rheumatism, which seldom deserted his limbs; but he never on this account gave it up; for regular exercise in the open air was, as he well knew, indispensable to the preservation of whatever remained of his decaying sight. He persevered, therefore, through the last two suffering years of his life, when it was peculiarly irksome and difficult for him to move; and even in the days immediately preceding his first attack of paralysis, when he was very feeble, he was out at his usual hours. His will, in truth, was always stronger than the bodily ills that beset him, and prevailed over them to the last.[8]

[8] On one occasion, when he was employed upon a work that interested him, because it related to a friend, he was attacked with pains that made a sitting posture impossible. But he would not yield. He took his noctograph to a sofa, and knelt before it so as to be able to continue his work. This resource, however, failed, and then he laid himself down flat upon the floor. This extraordinary operation went on during portions of nine successive days.

CHAPTER XI.

1837–1838.

Mr. Preſcott's Social Character. — Remarks on it by Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Parſons.

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Social ſpirit.

A TRUE and ſufficient underſtanding of Mr. Preſcott's modes of life cannot be obtained without a more detailed account than has been thus far given of his ſocial relations, and of the exactneſs with which he controlled and governed them.

Mr. Gardiner.

"Never was there," ſays his friend Mr. Gardiner, in an intereſting paper addreſſed to me, on this ſide of our friend's character, — "Never was there a man, who, by natural conſtitution, had a keener zeſt of ſocial enjoyment in all its varieties. His friend Mr. Parſons ſays of him, that one of the 'moſt remarkable traits of this remarkable man was his ſingular capacity of enjoyment. He could be happy in more ways, and more happy in every one of them, than any other perſon I have ever known.' This may be a ſtrong manner of ſtating the characteriſtic referred to; but ſo far as reſpects one of his chief ſources of happineſs, — ſocial enjoyment, — the idea would ſeem to be exemplified by the very different kinds of ſociety from which he appeared to derive almoſt equal pleaſure.

Power of receiving pleaſure.

Power of giving pleaſure.

"So, in regard to his capacity of imparting pleaſure to others, Mr. Parſons makes an equally ſtrong ſtatement; but it is one I fully concur in. 'If I were aſked,' he ſays, 'to name the man, whom I have known, whoſe coming was moſt ſure to be hailed as a pleaſant event by all whom he approached, I ſhould not only place Preſcott at the head of the liſt, but I could not place any other man near him.' I alſo muſt bear teſtimony, that I never have known any other man whoſe company was ſo univerſally attractive, — equally ſo to men and to women, to young and to old, and to all claſſes that he mingled with.

"With theſe capacities for both giving and receiving the higheſt degree of pleaſure in ſocial entertainment, there is no cauſe for wonder that this ſhould have been with him a favorite purſuit. The wonder is, rather, that he ſhould always — at leaſt after the firſt effervescence of youth — have kept it in ſuch perfect ſubordination to thoſe more important purſuits which were the buſineſs, and at the ſame time, on the whole, the higheſt enjoyment, of his life. I uſe the term purſuit, applying it to the one object no leſs than the other; for this it is which conſtitutes the peculiarity. Both were purſued at the ſame time, ardently and ſyſtematically. Neither was ſacrificed to the other for any great length of time. He felt that a due proportion of each — literary labor and ſocial amuſement — was eſſential to his happineſs, and he ſtudied the philoſophy of life, both theoretically and practically, with reference to his own natural temper and conſtitution, to aſcertain in what proportions they could beſt be combined to anſwer his whole purpoſe.

Economy of happineſs.

"Theſe proportions varied certainly at different times. There was a natural tendency of the graver purſuits to predominate more and more as he advanced in age, but never to the entire excluſion of a perfectly youthful enjoyment of whatever ſociety he ſought. There were, too, periods of cloſe retirement, — chiefly during his *villegiaturas* as he uſed to call his country life, — when he devoted himſelf, for a time almoſt excluſively, to his ſtudies and compoſitions, with little addition to the agreeable ſocial circle and quiet domeſtic life of his own and his father's family. But there were alſo correſponding periods of great relaxation, — what he uſed to call his 'loafing times,' — not always of ſhort duration either, — eſpecially in the interval between one long labor finiſhed and the beginning of another. At theſe periods he gave himſelf up to a long holiday, dividing his time almoſt wholly between the lighteſt literature and a great deal of ſocial amuſement. There was uſually ſomething of this, though for a ſhorter term, when he firſt returned to the city, after a ſummer or autumn campaign at Pepperell. And ſeldom, when away from Pepperell, was he ſo hard at work as not to enjoy an ample allowance of ſocial pleaſure. Nay, at the period of his life when he uſed to paſs a long ſummer, as well as autumn, at Pepperell, — that is, before either he or his father had a houſe on the ſea-ſhore, — it was his cuſtom to find an excuſe for an occaſional viſit of a day or two to the city, when he always arranged for, and counted upon, at leaſt one gay meeting of old friends at the dinner-table. After he became a ſummer inhabitant of Nahant, living in the unavoidable publicity of a faſhionable watering-place, the difficulty was to guard againſt the intruſion of too much company, rather than to get the quantum he required. This was among the cauſes which led him, in later years, to forſake Nahant for his more quiet ſea-ſhore reſidence at Lynn. But, wherever his reſidence was, frequent recreations of ſociety — domeſtic, faſhionable, literary, and convivial — were as much a part of his plan of life as the ſteady continuance of hiſtorical ſtudies and labors of author-ſhip.

"Loafing times."

"Yet, both before and after the publication of his 'Ferdinand and Iſabella,' — the firſt notice, be it remembered, even to his perſonal friends, of his extraordinary merits as a man of letters, — he was ſcrupulouſly obſervant of hours.

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Never ran to excefs in ſocial pleaſures.

Though indulging ſo freely, and with ſuch a zeſt, in this round of various ſociety, he would never allow himſelf to be drawn by it into very late ſittings. This was partly, no doubt, from domeſtic conſiderations regarding the general habit of his father's houſehold, continued afterwards in his own, but mainly becauſe he began the day early, and choſe to keep his ſtudy hours of the morrow unimpaired. Except, therefore, on ſome extraordinary and foreſeen occaſions of his earlier days, carefully arranged for beforehand, he uſed to make a point of quitting the company, of whatever kind, and whatever might be its attractions, at his hour. This was, for a long time, ten o'clock. It did not mean ten o'clock or thereabouts, as moſt men would have made it; but at ten preciſely he would inſiſt on going, in ſpite of all entreaty, as if to an engagement of the laſt importance.

Dinner at a reſtaurant.

"I remember particularly one inſtance to illuſtrate this. It occurred at ſome time while he was yet a member of his father's family, but, I think, after his marriage, and certainly before he had publiſhed himſelf to the world as an author, — that is, while he was ſcarcely known to many perſons as one engaged in any ſerious occupation. The caſe left an impreſſion, becauſe on this occaſion Mr. Preſcott, though not in his own houſe, was not a gueſt, but the entertainer, at a reſtaurateur's, of an invited company of young men, chiefly of the *bon-vivant* order. He took that mode ſometimes of giving a return dinner to avoid intruding too much on the hoſpitality of his father's roof, as well as to put at eaſe the ſort of company which promiſed exuberant mirth. His dinner hour was ſet early; purpoſely, no doubt, that all might be well over in good ſeaſon. But it proved to be a prolonged feſtivity. Under the brilliant auſpices of their hoſt, who was never in higher ſpirits, the company became very gay, and not at all diſpoſed to abridge their gayety, even after a reaſonable number of hours. As the hour of ten drew near, I noticed that Preſcott was beginning to get a little fidgety, and to drop ſome hints, which no one ſeemed willing to take, — for no one preſent, unleſs it were myſelf, was aware that time was of any more importance to our hoſt than it was to many of his gueſts. Preſently, to the general ſurpriſe, the hoſt himſelf got up abruptly, and addreſſed the company nearly as follows: 'Really, my friends, I am very ſorry to be obliged to tear myſelf from you at ſo very unreaſonable an hour; but you ſeem to have got your ſitting-breeches on for the night. I left mine at home, and muſt go. But I am ſure you will be very ſoon in no condition to miſs *me*, — eſpecially as I leave behind that excellent repreſentative,' — pointing to a baſket of ſeveral yet uncorked bottles, which ſtood in a corner. 'Then you know,' he added, 'you are juſt as much at home in this houſe as I am. You can call for what you like. Don't be alarmed, — I mean on *my* account. I abandon to you, without reſerve, all my beſt wine, my credit with the houſe, and my reputation to boot. Make free with them all, I beg of you, — and, if you don't go home till morning, I wiſh you a merry night of it.' With this he was off, and the Old South clock, hard by, was heard to ſtrike ten at the inſtant."

Mr. Gardiner, in the preceding remarks, refers more than once to the opinions of Profeſſor Theophilus Parſons on Mr.

Preſcott's ſocial character. They are contained in a paper which this early and intimate friend of the hiſtorian was good enough to give me; but there are other portions of the ſame paper ſo true, and ſo happily expreſſed, that I ſhould be unjuſt to my readers, if I were not to give them more than the glimpſes afforded in Mr. Gardiner's remarks.

Mr. Parſons.

Speaking of Mr. Preſcott's "marvellous popularity," Mr. Parſons goes on: —

Preſcott's popularity.

"I do not ſpeak of this as his *ſucceſs* in ſociety, for that would imply that he ſought for popularity and aimed at it, and this would be wholly untrue. It was not perhaps undeſired, and it certainly was neither unknown nor unwelcome to him. But it came, not becauſe he made any effort to procure it, but ſimply becauſe it was *inevitable*, by which I mean that it was the neceſſary effect of the combination of certain qualities in his character. Foremoſt among theſe, undoubtedly, was his univerſal, conſtant, and extreme kindneſs of heart, and its fitting exponent in as ſweet a temper as ever man had. But even theſe would not have ſufficed, but for his capacity for ſympathy, a quality which is not always the companion of a real benevolence. . . . . If Preſcott never demanded or deſired that others ſhould ſtand around and bow to him, it was not becauſe he could have no reaſon for claiming this. For all whom he came near felt, what he never ſeemed to feel, that there was, if not ſome renunciation of right, at leaſt a charming forgetfulneſs of ſelf, in the way in which he aſſerted no ſuperiority over any, but gave himſelf up to the companion of the moment, with the evident deſire to make him as happy as he could. And his own prompt and active ſympathy awoke the ſympathy of others. His gayety became theirs. He came, always bringing the gift of cheerfulneſs, and always offering it with ſuch genuine cordiality, that it was ſure to be accepted, and returned with increaſe. No wonder that he was juſt as welcome everywhere as ſunſhine. If I were aſked to name the man whom I have known, whoſe coming was moſt ſure to be hailed as a pleaſant event by all whom he approached, I ſhould not only place Preſcott at the head of the liſt, but I could not place any other man near him. And with all this univerſal ſympathy there was never any ſacrifice or loſs of himſelf. He did not go willingly to others becauſe his mind had no home of its own. When we ſee one ſeeking ſociety often, and enjoying it with peculiar reliſh, we can hardly forbear thinking that he thus comes abroad to find neceſſary recreation, and that, even if he be content at home, his joys are elſewhere. Nothing could be leſs true of Preſcott. It would have been equally difficult for one who knew him only in his home activities and his home happineſs, or only in the full glow of his ſocial pleaſures, to believe that he knew but half of the man, and that the other half was quite as full of its own life, and its own thorough enjoyment, as the half he ſaw."

CHAPTER XII.

1837.

Mr. Preſcott's Induſtry and general Character baſed on Principle and on Self-ſacrifice. — Temptations. — Expedients to overcome them. — Experiments. — Notes of what is read to him. — Compoſes without Writing. — Severe Diſcipline of his Moral and Religious Character. — Diſlikes to have his Habits interfered with. — Never ſhows Conſtraint. — Freedom of Manner in his Family and in Society. — His Influence on others. — His Charity to the Poor. — Inſtance of it.

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MR. PRESCOTT early diſcovered what many, whoſe ſocial poſition makes no ſevere demand on them for exertion, fail to diſcover until it is too late, — I mean, that induſtry of ſome ſort and an earneſt uſe of whatever faculties God has given us, are eſſential to even a moderate amount of happineſs in this world. He did not, however, come to this concluſion through his relations with ſociety. On the contrary, theſe relations during the moſt expoſed period of his youth were tempting him in exactly the oppoſite direction, and thus rendering his poſition dangerous to his character. He was handſome, gay, uncommonly entertaining, and a great favorite wherever he went. The accident to his ſight obviouſly excluded him from the profeſſions open to perſons of his own age and condition, and his father's fortune, if not great, was at leaſt ſuch as to relieve the ſon, with whoſe misfortune his

Temptations of his poſition in life.

whole family felt the tendereſt ſympathy, from the neceſſity of devoting himſelf to any occupation as a means of ſubſiſtence. A life of dainty, elegant idleneſs was, therefore, as freely open to him as it was to any young man of his time, and his infirmities would no doubt have excuſed him before his friends and the world, if he had given himſelf up to it. His perſonal relations, in fact, no leſs than his keen reliſh of ſocial enjoyments and his attractive qualities as a mere man of ſociety, all ſeemed to ſolicit him to a life of ſelf-indulgence.

Early determines to reſiſt the temptations of his condition.

But he perceived betimes that ſuch a life would be only one long miſtake, — that it might ſatisfy the years of youth, when the ſpirits are freſh, and the purſuit of pleaſure has been checked neither by ſorrow nor by diſappointment, but that it muſt leave the graver period of manhood without its appropriate intereſts, and old age without its appropriate reſpect. "It is of little moment," he therefore recorded, for his own warning and government, as early as 1822, — "it is of little moment whether I ſucceed in this or that thing, but it is of great moment that I am habitually induſtrious." This concluſion was reached by him three years before he began his ſearch for a ſubject to which he could devote ſerious and conſecutive labor. But it was eight years after the occurrence of the accident that had ſhut him out from the field of adventure in which moſt of thoſe who had been his companions and friends were already advancing and proſperous.[1]

And theſe eight years had been full of ſilent, earneſt teachings. The darkneſs in which he had ſo often been immured for weeks and months together had given him leiſure for thoughts which might otherwiſe never have come to him, or which would have come with much leſs power. Notwithſtanding his exuberant ſpirits, he had ſuffered hours of *ennui*, which, in a free and active life, and amidſt the pleaſures

[1] The ſame thought is often repeated in his Memoranda, but nowhere in ſtronger terms than in a paper written twenty-ſeven years later, and ſhowing that he adhered to his conviction on the ſubject through life. "I am convinced," he ſays, "that, whether *clairvoyant* or ſtone-blind, intellectual occupation — ſteady, regular literary occupation — is the only true vocation for me, — indiſpenſable to my happineſs."

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Reſolves on a life of labor.

of ſociety, would have been ſpared to him. The reſult, therefore, to which he was brought by the workings of his own mind, was, that, to be happy, he muſt lead a life of continuous, uſeful induſtry, — ſuch an induſtry as he would at laſt enjoy if it were faithfully perſiſted in, and if it tended to the benefit of others.

Does not love work.

We have ſeen how ingenious he was in inventing for himſelf the mechanical contrivances indiſpenſable to the labor and ſtudy on which, with his imperfect ſight, he ſo much depended. But there was another obſtacle in his way of a different ſort, and one ſtill more difficult and diſagreeable to encounter. He did not love work. He could do it, and had done it often, but only under ſome ſtrong ſtimulus. He had, for inſtance, commonly learned his leſſons well in boyhood, becauſe he reſpected Dr. Gardiner, and was ſure to have been puniſhed, if he had neglected them. At college, he conſidered a certain moderate amount of ſcholarſhip neceſſary to the character of a gentleman, and came up to his own not very high ſtandard with a good degree of alacrity. And he had always deſired to ſatisfy and gratify his father, whoſe authority he felt to be gentle as well as juſt, and whoſe wiſhes were almoſt always obeyed, even in his earlier and more thoughtleſs years. But the preſent purpoſe of his life demanded a different foundation from all this,

But determines to work.

— one much deeper and much more ſolid. He was now to be a ſcholar, and to work not only faithfully, but gladly, — almoſt diſintereſtedly; for without ſuch work, as he well knew, no permanent and worthy reſult could be obtained, — no ultimate intellectual ſucceſs achieved. "Be occupied *always*," he therefore recorded firmly at the outſet of his new life.

But his nature — buoyant, frolicſome, and ſimple-hearted — and his temperament — ſtrong, active, and wilful — long contended againſt his wiſe determination. While he was engaged with his French and Italian ſtudies, he did not, indeed, find induſtry difficult; for ſuch ſtudies were both pleaſant and light. But when they were over, and he was perſuaded that German

was inacceſſible to him, his exertions relaxed. "I have read with no method, and very little diligence or ſpirit, for three months," he ſaid in 1824. "To the end of my life, I truſt, I ſhall be more avaricious of time, and never put up with a ſmaller average than ſeven hours of intellectual occupation *per diem*. Leſs than that cannot diſcharge my duties to mankind, ſatisfy my own feelings, or give me a rank in the community of letters." But a few months afterwards he finds it needful to adopt new reſolutions of reform. He complains bitterly that he "really works leſs than an hour a day," and determines that it ſhall at any rate be five hours, — a determination, however, which he makes only to be mortified again and again, that he can, with much effort, hardly come up to three or four. And ſo it went on for two years of alternating ſtruggles and failures. Even after he had entered on the compoſition of the "Ferdinand and Iſabella," it was not much better. The habit of induſtry indiſpenſable to ſucceſs was hard to be acquired. Reſolutions, ſuch as he had been long in the habit of making, but which, from their nature, ſhould rather have been called good purpoſes, would not do it. He broke them continually. Some other expedient, therefore, — one more abſolute and of more ſtringent authority, — muſt be reſorted to, or he muſt fail.[2]

Difficulties.

Reſolutions.

A good deal annoyed with himſelf, he turned to what had earlier been a favorite mode of compelling himſelf to keep his own good reſolutions, — I mean a ſyſtem of pecuniary mulcts and penalties. In college, he began this practice, which he continued through his whole life, by puniſhing himſelf with a moderate fine, to be paid, after certain neglects or offences, to ſome charity. But this had not quite enough of the eſſential character of puniſhment in it, ſince he was liberally ſupplied with money, and loved to give it away almoſt as well as his mother did. He therefore adopted another mode, that

Penalties for idleneſs.

[2] There is a characteriſtic alluſion to this frailty in his notice of a good reſolution which he made at the end of one of his memorandum books, and to which he refers in the firſt words of the next: "I ended the laſt book with a good reſolution. I ſhall never be too old to *make* them. See if I ſhall ever be old enough to *keep* them."

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Wagers.

proved a little more effectual. He made bets, of some consequence, with such of his college friends as would take them, to the effect that he would avoid or would do certain things, in relation to which he was sure he should be mortified to have them know he had failed. But it was a whimsical peculiarity of these bets, to be on such subjects, or in such forms, that commonly nobody but himself could know whether he had lost or won. The decision was left to his own honor. It should be added, therefore, that, as such bets were made wholly for his own improvement, he was never at this period known to exact a forfeit when his adversary had lost. He considered his success as his true winning, and had no wish that anybody should be punished for it. He desired only to punish himself, and therefore, when he had lost, was sure to proclaim himself the loser and pay the bet. When he had won, he said nothing.

Pecuniary bond to Mr. English.

It was to this last form of stimulus or punishment, therefore, that he resorted, when he found his industry in relation to the composition of the "Ferdinand and Isabella" not only flagging, but so seriously falling off that he began to be alarmed for the final result. In September, 1828, he gave a bond to Mr. English, then acting as his reader and secretary, to pay him a thousand dollars, if, within one year from that date, he had not written two hundred and fifty pages of his history, "the object being," as he said, "to prevent further vacillation until he had written so much as would secure his interest in going through with it." He did not incur the penalty, and thirteen years afterwards he recorded his conviction that the arrangement had been wise. "I judged right," he said, "that, when I had made so large an investment of time and labor, I should not flag again."

Mr. English's account of it.

But Mr. English's account of the affair is more minute, and is not a little curious as an expression of Mr. Prescott's character.

"The bond or agreement made," he writes to me, "bound each of us to take from the other the amount Mr. Prescott should himself decide to be

won on certain wagers written by himſelf and ſealed up. I never ſaw them, and do not, to this day, know the ſubject of the bets. I took his word that they were made to gratify ſome fancy of his own, and that they were ſo proportioned that the odds were much in my favor, — for inſtance, that he riſked in the proportion of one hundred to my twenty. This contract, I ſuppoſe, continued to his death; at any rate, he never notified me that it had ceaſed. He often added new wagers, or increaſed the amount of the old ones, as we have written our ſignatures with freſh dates over and over again on the bottom and margins of the ſheets at numerous times ſince 1831,[3] down to within a few years of his death. He would bring the paper to my office ſo folded that I could not read what was written in it, and, with a ſmile, aſk me to ſign again. I always did ſo at his requeſt, without knowing what I ſigned, having the moſt implicit confidence that it was only a harmleſs affair, and leaving it wholly to him to decide whether I loſt or won. I remember his paying me two winnings, — one, ſeveral years ago, of twenty or thirty dollars, — the other, ſomewhere about ten years ago, of one hundred. He afterwards called on me to pay a loſs of twenty or thirty, I forget which. He would come into my office with a ſmile, lay down his money, and ſay, 'You remember that bond? you have won that,' and go out with a laugh. On the other occaſion, 'You have loſt this time, and muſt pay me twenty or thirty dollars,' whichever it was. I handed him the money without remark. He laughed and ſaid, that, on the whole, I was in pocket ſo far, but he could not tell, how it would be next time, and went out without anything more ſaid on either ſide."

This document is loſt, but another, not unlike it, and, what is remarkable, made with another friend, while the firſt bond was yet in full force, is preſerved, and is very minute and ſtringent. Both prove that work was often painfully unwelcome to him, even when he had been long accuſtomed to it, and that not unfrequently, in order to rouſe himſelf to a proper exertion of his faculties, he was willing to call in the aid of ſome foreign, direct ſtimulus. And this he did from a deliberate perſuaſion that it was a duty he owed to himſelf, to employ the talents that had been given to him "as ever in the great Taſkmaſter's eye." His literary memoranda afford abundant proof of this. Indeed, they are throughout a ſort of monument of it, for they were made in a great degree to record his ſhortcomings, and to ſtimulate his uncertain induſtry. They contain many ſcores of phraſes, like theſe, ſcattered over

[3] In 1831, Mr. Engliſh ceaſed to act as Mr. Preſcott's ſecretary.

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above twenty years of the moſt active and important part of his life.

Complaints of himſelf.

"I have worked lazily enough, latterly, or, rather, have been too lazy to work at all. — Ended the old year [1834] very badly. The laſt four weeks abſolute annihilation. — Another three months, ſince the laſt entry, and three months of *dolce far niente*. Not ſo *dolce* either. Fortunately for the good economy and progreſs of the ſpecies, activity — activity, mental or phyſical — is indiſpenſable to happineſs."

On another occaſion, after enumerating the work he had done during the preceding ſix months, he ſays: —

"There is the ſum total of what I have done in this *dizzy-pated* winter, which has left me in worſe health and ſpirits, and with leſs to ſhow in any other way, than any paſt winter for ten years, — nay, twenty, — *proh pudor!*"

And again, in 1845: —

"I find it as hard to get under way as a crazy hulk that has been hauled up for repairs. But I will mend, and, that I may do ſo, will make hebdomadal entries of my lazineſs. I think I can't ſtand the repetition of ſuch records long."

But the very next week, in reference to the "Conqueſt of Peru," which he was then writing, he ſays: —

"*Horreſco referens!* I have actually done nothing ſince laſt entry. ..... If I can once get in harneſs and at work, I ſhall do well enough. But my joints are ſtiff, I think, as I grow old. So, to give myſelf a ſtart, I have made a wager with Mr. Otis,[4] that I will reel off at leaſt one page *per diem*, barring certain contingencies. If I can't do this, it muſt be a gone caſe, and Pizarro may look to have his miſdeeds ſhown up by a better pen."

His literary memoranda.

No doubt, in theſe paſſages of his private memoranda, and in many more, both earlier and later, of the ſame ſort, there is high coloring. But it was intentional. The main object of the whole record for nearly forty years was to ſtimulate his induſtry, and to prevent himſelf from relapſing into the idleneſs, or into the light and pleaſant occupations, that conſtantly

4 Mr. Edmund B. Otis, who was then acting as his ſecretary.

tempted him from his proper ſtudies. As he intimates in the laſt extract, when he was well entered on a ſubject and the impetus was obtained, he generally enjoyed his work, and felt the happineſs and peace of conſcience which he knew he could get in no other way. But the difficulty was, to obtain the impetus. After finiſhing one work, he did not like to begin another, and, even when he had completed a ſingle chapter, he was often unwilling to take up the next. When he moved from the town to the country, or from the country to the town, he did not naturally or eaſily fall into his uſual train of occupations. In ſhort, whenever there was a pauſe, he wanted to turn aſide into ſome other path, rather than to continue in the difficult one right before him; but he very rarely went far aſtray, before he had the courage to puniſh himſelf and come back.

Diſlike of work.

But, beſides being intended for a rebuke to the idle and light-hearted tendencies of his nature, his Memoranda were deſigned to record the various experiments he made to overcome the peculiar difficulties in his way, and thus aſſiſt him to encounter others more ſucceſsfully. Some of theſe bear the ſame marks of ingenuity and adaptation which characterized his mechanical contrivances for ſparing his ſight, and were near akin to them.

His notes for work.

The notes that were taken from the books read to him, or which he was able to read himſelf, were made with very great care. They varied in their character at different periods, going more into detail at firſt than they did later. But they were always ample, abundant. I have now before me above a thouſand pages of them, which yet cover only a ſmall portion of the ground of "Ferdinand and Iſabella." From theſe, and ſimilar maſſes of manuſcript, were ſelected, when they were wanted, ſuch materials and hints as would ſuit the purpoſe of any given chapter or diviſion of the work that might be in hand, and theſe again were tranſcribed by themſelves, in a very plain hand, for uſe. If his eye ſerved him tolerably well, he read ſuch of theſe ſelected notes as were moſt im-

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portant, with great care, repeatedly, until he felt himſelf to be abſolute maſter of their contents. If they were not ſo important, they were read to him, rarely leſs than ſix times, — generally more, — "ſome," he ſays, "a dozen times," — ſo that he might not only comprehend their general ſcope, but be able to judge of any varieties involved in their ſeparate ſtatements, whether of opinion or of fact.

How he compoſed in his memory.

When he had thus collected all needful materials, he began the taſk of compoſition in his memory, — very difficult from the detail into which it was neceſſarily carried, and from the exactneſs that was to be obſerved in each ſtep as he advanced. Of its value and importance he was early aware, and, as he gradually ſurmounted the peculiar embarraſſments it preſented, he relied on it more and more excluſively, until at laſt he attained an extraordinary power in its uſe and application.

In 1824, he ſaid, that, before compoſing anything, he found it neceſſary "to ripen the ſubject by much reflection in his mind." This, it will be remembered, was when he had not even begun his preliminary Spaniſh ſtudies, and had, in fact, hazarded nothing more ſerious than an article for the "North American Review." But, as ſoon as he had entered on the compoſition of the "Ferdinand and Iſabella," he felt fully its great importance and wide conſequences. Within a fortnight, he recorded: "Never take up my pen, until I have travelled over the ſubject ſo often, that I can write almoſt from memory." It was really deſirable to write, not almoſt, but altogether, from memory. He labored, therefore, long for it, and ſucceeded, by great and continuous efforts, in obtaining the much-coveted power. "Think concentratedly," he ſays, "when I think at all."[4] And again, "Think cloſely, gradually concentrating the circle of thought."[5] At laſt, in 1841, when

[4] Again, November 10, 1839, he records: "Think continuouſly and cloſely before taking up my pen; make the corrections chiefly in my own mind; not attempt to overlook my noctographs; very trying to the eye. If I would enjoy compoſition, write well, and make progreſs, I muſt give my whole ſoul to it, ſo as not

he was employed on the "Mexico," he records, after many previous memoranda on the ſubject: "My way has lately been to go over a large maſs, — over and over, till ready to throw it on paper." And the next year, 1842, he ſays: "Concentrate more reſolutely my thoughts the firſt day of meditation, — going over and over, — thinking once before going to bed, or in bed, or before riſing, — prefer the latter. And after one day of chewing the cud ſhould be [i. e. ought to be] ready to write. It was three days for this chapter,"—["Conqueſt of Mexico," Book V., Chapter II.] Sometimes it was longer, but, in general, a ſingle whole day, or two or three evenings, with the hours of his exerciſe in riding or walking, were found to be ſufficient for ſuch careful meditation.[6]

Concentration of mind.

The reſult was remarkable — almoſt incredible — as to the maſſes he could thus hold in a ſort of abeyance in his mind, and as to the length of time he could keep them there, and conſider and reconſider them without confuſion or wearineſs. Thus, he ſays that he carried in his memory the firſt and ſecond chapters of the fifth book of the "Conqueſt of Peru," and ran over the whole ground ſeveral times before beginning to write, although theſe two chapters fill fifty-ſix pages of printed text; and he records the ſame thing of chapters fifth, ſixth, and ſeventh, in the ſecond book of "Philip the Second,"

Large maſſes that he could hold in his memory.

to know the preſence of another in the room; going over the work again and again (not too faſtidious, nor formal); thinking when walking and dreſſing, &c.; and not too ſcrupulous, heſitating in my final corrections. It is a ſhame and a ſin to waſte time on mere form. Have been very contented and happy here [Pepperell]; fine weather, and pleaſing occupation."

[6] In preparing Chapter III. of the Introduction to the "Conqueſt of Peru," — about thirty printed pages, — he records that, after having done all the neceſſary reading, he ſtudied five days on the memoranda he had made, reflected on them one day more, and then gave four days to writing the text, and five to writing the notes. Gibbon, too, uſed to compoſe in his mind; but it was in a very different way, and with very different reſults. He prepared only a paragraph at a time, and that he did, as he ſays, in order "to try it by the ear." (Miſc. Works, 1814, Vol. I. p. 230.) I think the effect of this loud recital of his work to himſelf is plain in the well-known cadence of his ſentences. Mr. Preſcott never, ſo far as I know, repeated his chapters aloud. His mental repetition was generally done when he was riding, or walking, or driving.

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which make together ſeventy-two pages, and on which he was employed ſixty-two days.[7]

He frequently kept about ſixty pages in his memory for ſeveral days, and went over the whole maſs five or ſix times, moulding and remoulding the ſentences at each ſucceſſive return. But this power did not remain in full vigor to the laſt. When he was writing the third volume of "Philip the Second," he found that he could not carry more than about forty pages in his mind at once, and ſpoke to me of it as a ſad failure of memory, which, no doubt, it was in one point of view, although, in another, it can be regarded only as an expreſſion of the ſurpriſing power at one time reached by a faculty which in its decline was ſtill ſo marvellous. But, whatever might be the amount that he had thus prepared in his mind, he went over it five or ſix times, as a general rule, — ſometimes more, — and once, at leaſt, he did it, for a ſingle chapter, ſixteen times, — an inſtance of patient, untiring labor for which it will not be eaſy to find a parallel.[8]

Writing out by the noctograph, and copying.

Writing down by the help of his apparatus what had been ſo carefully prepared in his memory was a rapid and not diſagreeable operation, eſpecially in the compoſition of his "Conqueſt of Mexico," and of his later works, when the habit of doing it had become fixed and comparatively eaſy. As the ſheets were thrown off, the ſecretary deciphered and copied

7 His words are: "The batch — all run over in my mind ſeveral times, from beginning to end, before writing a word — has been got out, reading, thinking, and writing, in ſixty-two days."

8 Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus (De Compoſitione Verborum, Ed. Schaefer, 1808, p. 406) ſays, that Plato continued to correct and poliſh the ſtyle of his Dialogues when he was eighty years old. Ὁ δὲ Πλάτων τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ διαλόγους κτένιζων καὶ βοστρυχίζων καὶ πάντα τρόπον ἀναπλέκων οὐ διέλιπεν ὀγδοήκοντα γεγονὼς ἔτη. See, also, the well-conſidered remarks on a careful reviſion of ſtyle by good writers of all ages, in the twenty-firſt of Mr. G. P. Marſh's Lectures on the Engliſh Language (New York, 1860), — a book full of rich, original thought and painſtaking, conſcientious inveſtigation. "Literary biography," he ſays, "furniſhes the moſt abundant proofs, that, in all ages, the works which ſtand as types of language and compoſition have been of ſlow and laborious production, and have undergone the moſt careful and repeated reviſion and emendation." This, I have no doubt, is what Dionyſius meant, when he ſaid that Plato did not ceaſe to comb and curl and braid the locks of his Dialogues, even when he was eighty years old, — an odd figure of ſpeech, but a very ſignificant one.

them in a large round hand, — and then they were laid aſide, generally for ſome months, or even longer, that the ſubject might cool in the author's mind, and the imperfections of its treatment become, in conſequence, more readily apparent to him. At the end of this period, or whenever the time for a final reviſion had come, he choſe the hours or the minutes in each day — for they were often only minutes — when his eye would permit him to read the manuſcript himſelf, and then he went over it with extreme care. This he held to be an important proceſs, and never, I think, truſted it wholly to the ear. Certainly he never did ſo, if he could poſſibly avoid it. He believed that what was to be read by the eye of another ſhould be, at leaſt once, ſeverely reviſed by the eye of its author.

Very careful reviſion.

As the proof-ſheets came from the preſs, his friend Mr. Folſom corrected them, ſuggeſting, at the ſame time, any emendations or improvements in the ſtyle that might occur to him, with the freedom of an old friendſhip, as well as with the ſkill and taſte of a well-practiſed criticiſm; and then, the author having himſelf paſſed judgment upon the ſuggeſtions thus offered to him, and having taken ſuch as he approved, — rarely more than one third, or even one fifth, — the whole was delivered to the unchanging ſtereotype.[9]

Mr. Folſom's corrections.

This proceſs, from the firſt breaking ground with inquiries into the ſubject to the final yielding of the completed work to the preſs, was, no doubt, very elaborate and painſtaking; but it ſeems to me that it was ſingularly adapted to the peculiar difficulties and embarraſſments of Mr. Preſcott's caſe, and I do

The whole proceſs elaborate.

9 Mr. Folſom — who had known him from the period of his college life — made before the American Academy, ſoon after his friend's death, ſome very graceful and appropriate remarks on his modes of compoſition, with which his "Cambridge Aldus," as Preſcott was wont to call Mr. Folſom, was eſpecially familiar. On the ſame occaſion, other more general, but not leſs intereſting, remarks on his life and character were made by the Rev. Dr. George E. Ellis of Charleſtown, the Hon. Charles G. Loring of Boſton, and Profeſſor Theophilus Parſons of Harvard College, — the laſt two, like Mr. Folſom, members of the Club to which Mr. Preſcott ſo many years belonged. See the "Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences," Vol. IV. pp. 149–163.

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not ſuppoſe that in any other way he could have accompliſhed ſo much, or have done it ſo well. But, whether this were ſo or not, the great labor it implied, added to the unceaſing care he was compelled to practiſe for forty years, in order to protect his health, and preſerve and prolong the failing powers of the ſingle eye that remained to him, ſo as to enable him to purſue the minute hiſtorical inveſtigations which ſeemed to be forbidden by the conditions of his life, is a very extraordinary ſpectacle. It is, no leſs, one full of inſtruction to thoſe who think that a life without ſerious occupation can be juſtified, either by the obſtacles or the temptations it may be called to encounter.

Its teachings.

His moral ſupervision of his own character.

But there is another ſide of his character, which ſhould not be left out of view, and yet one which I cannot approach except with miſgiving; I mean that which involves the moral and religious elements of his nature. Of theſe, ſo far as a belief in Chriſtianity is concerned, and a conſcientious and repeated examination of its authority as a revelation, I have already ſpoken. His life, too, devoted to hard labor, — often phyſically painful, — with the prevalent idea not only of cultivating his own faculties, and promoting his own improvement, but of fulfilling his duties towards his fellow-men, was neceſſarily one of conſtant, careful diſcipline. But, behind all this, and deeper than all this, lay, as its foundation, his watchfulneſs over his moral and religious character, its weakneſſes and its temptations.

Record of faults.

With theſe he dealt, to a remarkable degree, in the ſame way, and on the ſame ſyſtem, which he applied to his phyſical health and his intellectual culture. He made a record of everything that was amiſs, and examined and conſidered and ſtudied that record conſtantly and conſcientiouſly. It was written on ſeparate ſlips of paper, — done always with his own hand, — ſeen only by his own eye. Theſe ſlips he preſerved in a large envelope, and kept them in the moſt reſerved and private manner. From time to time, when his ſight permitted, — and generally on Sunday, after returning from the morning

ſervice,—he took them out and looked them over, one by one. If any habitual fault were, as he thought, eradicated, he deſtroyed the record of it; if a new one had appeared, he entered it on its ſeparate ſlip, and placed it with the reſt for future warning and reproof. This habit, known only to the innermoſt circle of thoſe who lived around his heart, was perſevered in to the laſt. After his death the envelope was found, marked, as it was known that it would be, "To be burnt." And it *was* burnt. No record, therefore, remains on earth of this remarkable ſelf-diſcipline. But it remains in the memory of his beautiful and pure life, and in the books that ſhall be opened at the great day, when the thoughts of all hearts ſhall be made manifeſt.

Probably to thoſe who knew my friend only as men commonly know one another in ſociety, and even to the many who knew him familiarly, theſe accounts of his private habits and careful ſelf-diſcipline may be unexpected, and may ſeem ſtrange. But they are true. The foundations of his character were laid as deep as I have deſcribed them, — the vigilance over his own conduct was as ſtrict. But he always deſired to have as little of this ſeen as poſſible. He deteſted all pretence and cant. He made no preſumptuous claims to the virtues which everybody, who knew him at all, knew he poſſeſſed. He did not, for inſtance, like to ſay that he acted in any individual caſe from "a ſenſe of duty." He avoided that particular phraſe, as he more than once told me he did, and as I know his father had done before him, becauſe it is ſo often uſed to hide mean or unworthy motives. I am pretty ſure that I never heard him uſe it, and on one occaſion, when a perſon for whom he had much regard was urging him to do ſomething which, after all, could only end in ſocial pleaſures for both of them, and added as an ultimate argument, "But can't you make *a duty* of it?" — he repeated the words to me afterwards with the heartieſt diſguſt. But, during his riper years, nobody, I think, ever ſaw anything in him which contradicted the idea that he was governed by high motives. It

Makes no pretenſions to goodneſs.

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was only that he was instinctively unwilling to parade them, — that he was remarkably free from anything like pretension.

His industry long unknown.

He carried this very far. To take a strong example, few persons suspected him of literary industry till all the world knew what he had done. Not half a dozen, I think, out of his own family, were aware, during the whole period in which he was employed on his "Ferdinand and Isabella," that he was occupied with *any* considerable literary undertaking, and hardly anybody knew what it was. Most of his friends thought that he led rather an idle, unprofitable life, but attributed it to his infirmity, and pardoned or overlooked it as a misfortune, rather than as anything discreditable. On one occasion a near connection, whom he was in the habit of meeting in the most familiar and pleasant manner at least once a week, affectionately urged him to undertake some serious occupation as a thing essential to his happiness, and even to his respectable position in society. And yet, at that moment, he had been eight years laboring on his first great work, and, though thus pressed and tempted, he did not confess how he was employed.[10]

Very sensitive.

He was sensitive, from his very nature as well as from the infirmities that beset him, and this sensitiveness of temperament made it more than commonly disagreeable to him to have his exact habits interfered with or intruded upon. But he did not willingly permit his annoyance to be seen, and few ever suspected that he felt it. When he was riding or taking his long walks, he was, as we have seen, in the habit of going

[10] As early as 1821, he showed signs of this sensitiveness, which so remarkably characterized all his literary labors. After indicating two or three persons, one of whom he might consult when he should be writing a review for the "North American," he adds: "Nor shall any one else, if I can help it, know that I am writing." This occasional reticence — so complete, so absolute, as it was in the case of the "Ferdinand and Isabella" — is a remarkable trait in the character of one who was commonly open-hearted almost to weakness. I do not believe that three persons out of his own home knew that he was writing that work until it was nearly completed. Indeed, I am not aware that anybody knew it, for several years, except myself, his family, and those who helped him abroad in collecting materials.

over and over again in his memory whatever he might laſt have compoſed, and thus correcting and finiſhing his work in a way peculiarly agreeable to himſelf. Of courſe, under ſuch circumſtances, any interruption to the current of his thoughts was unwelcome. And yet who of the hundreds that ſtopped him in his daily walks, or joined him on horſeback, eager for his kindly greeting or animated converſation, was ever received with any other than a pleaſant welcome? During one winter, I know that the ſame friend overtook him ſo often in his morning ride, that he gave up his favorite road to avoid a kindneſs which he was not willing to ſeem to decline. His father and he underſtood one another completely on this point. They often mounted at the ſame time, but always turned their horſes in different directions.

But rarely ſhowed it.

Nor was there in his intercourſe at home or abroad — with ſtrangers or with his familiar friends — any noticeable trace of the ſtrict government to which he ſubjected his time and his character. In his ſtudy, everything went on by rule. His table and his papers were always in the niceſt order. His chair ſtood always in the ſame ſpot, and — what was important — in the ſame relations to the light. The furniture of the room was always arranged in the ſame manner. The hours, and often even the minutes, were counted and appropriated. But when he came out from his work and joined his family, the change was complete, — the relaxation abſolute. Eſpecially in the latter part of his life, and in the cheerful parlor of the old homeſtead at Pepperell, ſurrounded by his children and their young friends, his gay ſpirits were counted upon by all as an unfailing reſource. The evening games could not be begun, the entertaining book could not be opened, until he had come from his work, and taken his accuſtomed place in the circle which his preſence always made bright.

His rigorous habits little ſuſpected.

In ſociety it was the ſame. He was never otherwiſe than eaſy and unconſtrained. It would have been difficult to find him in a company of perſons where any one was more attractive than he was. But he never ſeemed to be aware of it, or to

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His converſation never ambitious.

make an effort to diſtinguiſh himſelf. The brilliant things he ſometimes ſaid were almoſt always in the nature of repartees, and depended ſo much for their effect on what had gone before that thoſe who ſaw him oftenest and knew him beſt remember little of his converſation, except that it was always agreeable, — often full of drollery, — occaſionally ſparkling. But it was one of its peculiarities, that it became ſometimes amuſing from its careleſſneſs, — running into blunders and inconſequences, not unlike Iriſh bulls, which nobody ſeemed to enjoy ſo heartily as he did, or to expoſe with ſuch happy gayety. Eminently natural he always was, — everybody ſaw it who met him, — and in this quality reſided, no doubt, much of the charm of his perſonal intercourſe.

Never conſtrained in manner.

But it was certainly remarkable that one who lived ſo many hours of each day by ſuch rigorous rules, and who ſubjected himſelf conſtantly to a diſcipline, phyſical, intellectual, and moral, ſo exact, ſhould yet have been thus eaſy, unconſtrained, and even careleſs in all ſocieties, at home and abroad, — with his children hardly more than with perſons whom he ſaw for the firſt time. Such apparent contradictions — ſuch a union of qualities and characteriſtics which nature commonly holds carefully aſunder — have not always been intelligible to thoſe who occaſionally caught glimpſes of them, without being conſtantly near enough to ſee how they were produced, or how they acted upon each other. It was a combination which could, I conceive, have been originally found or formed in no nature that had not that eſſential goodneſs and ſweetneſs for which the beſt training is but a poor ſubſtitute; and they could have been brought into ſuch intimate union by no ſolvent leſs active than his charming ſpirits, which ſeemed to ſhed brightneſs over his whole character. His ſunny ſmile was abſolutely contagious, — his cordial eaſy manners were irreſiſtible. All who approached him felt and acknowledged their influence, and few thought of what might lie beneath them.

One trait of his character, however, which, from its nature, was leſs obvious than the traits expreſſed by his general man-

His charity to the poor.

ners, ſhould be eſpecially noticed, — I mean his charity to the poor. His liberality in contributing to whatever would improve and benefit the community was neceſſarily known of many. Not ſo his private generoſity. This he had, as it were, inherited. His mother's greateſt happineſs, beyond the circle of her family, was found in a free-handed beneficence. In the latter part of her life, when her reſources were much beyond the claims that could be made on them by children already independent, ſhe avoided all perſonal expenſe, and gave more than half her income to the poor. Her ſon fully ſhared her ſpirit. While ſhe lived, he co-operated with her, and, after her death, her penſioners were not permitted, ſo far as money could do it, to feel their loſs.

But, from his earlieſt manhood, he was always free and liberal. In many years he gave away more than he intended to do, and more than he afterwards thought he ought to have done. But this did not prevent him from repeating the miſtake or the miſcalculation. Indeed, though he was conſiderate and careful, as well as liberal, in his contributions to public inſtitutions, he was very impulſive in his private charities. An inſtance happily recorded by Mr. Robert Carter, who was his ſecretary for about a year, in 1847–1848, will better explain this part of his character than a page of generalities.

Mr. Carter.

"One bitter cold day," he ſays, "I came to the ſtudy, as uſual, at half paſt ten. Mr. Preſcott went to work immediately on two long and important letters, one to Señor de Gayangos at Madrid, the other to Count Circourt at Paris, which he was very anxious to have finiſhed in ſeaſon to go by that week's mail to Europe. There was barely ſufficient time to get them ready before the mail cloſed. They were about half done when twelve o'clock, his hour for exerciſe, arrived. He was ſo anxious to get them off that he did what I had never known him to do before; he relinquiſhed his walk, and kept at his writing-caſe, telling me to go out and ſtretch my legs, but to be ſure and return at one o'clock, when he would have the letters ready to be copied. I offered to remain and copy as he wrote, but he ſaid there would be time enough if I came back at one o'clock. He never would allow me to work for him beyond the hours ſtipulated in our agreement, and was very careful not to encroach upon my time, even for a minute, though he often made me take holidays. I ſtrolled about the city for

half an hour, and on my way back, passing through Broad Street, where the Irish congregate, met one Michael Sullivan, whom I knew. He seemed to be in trouble, and I inquired what ailed him. He said he had been sick and out of work, and had no money, and his family were starving with cold. I went with him to the den where he lived, and found his wife and three or four small children in a wretched loft over a warehouse, where they were lying on the floor huddled in a pile of straw and shavings, with some rags and pieces of old carpet over them. The only furniture in the room was a chair, a broken table, and a small stove, in which were the expiring embers of a scanty handful of coal, which they had begged from neighbors equally poor. The mercury was below zero out of doors, and the dilapidated apartment was not much warmer than the street. I had no time to spare, and the detention, slight as it was, prevented me from getting back to Mr. Prescott's till a quarter past one. His manuscript lay on my desk, and he was walking about the room in a state of impatience, I knew, though he showed none, except by looking at his watch. As I warmed my chilled hands over the fire, I told him, by way of apology, what had detained me. Without speaking, he stepped to a drawer where scraps of writing paper were kept, took out a piece, and, laying it on my desk, told me to write an order on Mr. —— (a coal-dealer with whom he kept an account always open for such purposes) for a ton of coal, to be delivered without delay to Michael Sullivan, Broad Street. He then went to his bell-rope, and gave it a vehement pull. A servant entered as I finished the order. 'Take this,' he said, 'as quick as you can to Mr. ——, and see that the coal is delivered at once. What is the number of the house in Broad Street?'

"I had neglected to notice the number, though I could find the place readily myself. I therefore suggested to Mr. Prescott, that, as there were probably twenty Michael Sullivans in Broad Street, the coal might not reach the right man, unless I saw to it in person, which I would do when I went to dinner at half past two o'clock.

"'Thank you! thank you!' he said; 'but go at once, there will be time enough left in getting the coal.'

"I reminded him of the letters. 'Go! go! never mind the letters. Gayangos and Circourt will not freeze if they never get them, and Mrs. O'Sullivan may, if you don't hurry. Stay! can the man be trusted with money? or will he spend it all for drink?' He pulled out his pocket-book. I told him he could be trusted. He handed me five dollars. 'See that they are made comfortable, at least while this cold spell lasts. Take time enough to see to them; I shall not want you till six. Don't let them know I sent the money, or all Broad Street will be here begging within twenty-four hours.'

"I relieved Mr. *O'*Sullivan, as Mr. Prescott persisted in calling him, and, when I returned at six, I entered in the account-book, '*Charity* five dollars.' 'Always tell me when you know of such cases,' he said, 'and I shall be only too happy to do something for them. I cannot go about myself to find them out, but I shall be always ready to contribute.'

"He did not let the matter rest there, but kept playfully inquiring after my

friends Mr. and Mrs. *O'*Sullivan, until I satisfied him by aſcertaining that he had found employment, and could provide for his family. After that he never alluded to them again." [11]

[11] From the New York "Tribune," as copied into the "Preſcott Memorial," New York, 1859. Sullivan was, no doubt, a Catholic, as were moſt of the poor Iriſh, who then herded in Broad Street. But Preſcott cared not a whit what was the religion of the poor he helped. It was enough that they were ſuffering.

CHAPTER XIII.

1837.

Period immediately after the Publication of "Ferdinand and Iſabella." — Thinks of writing a Life of Molière; but prefers Spaniſh Subjects. — Reviews. — Inquires again into the Truth of Chriſtianity.—"Conqueſt of Mexico."—Books and Manuſcripts obtained for it. — Humboldt. — Indolence. — Correſpondence with Waſhington Irving.

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THE ſummer of 1836, when the compoſition of "Ferdinand and Iſabella" was completed, and the following eighteen months, during which it was carried through the preſs and its ſucceſs made ſure, conſtituted a very happy period in Mr. Preſcott's life. The inexperienced author ſpeculated, indeed, more than he needed to have done on the riſks of his venture, and felt concerning the final reſult a good deal of nervous curioſity, which, if it did not amount to anxiety, was ſomething very near to it. But he ſoon began to conſider what he ſhould do when the holidays in which he was indulging himſelf ſhould come to an end. For ſome time he was very uncertain. It was his way in ſuch caſes to doubt long.

At one period, he determined, if the "Ferdinand and Iſabella" ſhould be coldly received, to take up ſome lighter ſubject, for which, with all his diſtruſt of himſelf, he could not doubt his competency. Several ſubjects came readily to his

thoughts, but none tempted him so much as Molière, on whose character and works he had, in 1828, written a pleasant article for the "North American Review," — the "Old North," as he used to call it. As soon, therefore, as he had corrected the last sheets of the "Catholic Sovereigns," he wrote to me about his new project, knowing that I was in Paris, where I might help him in collecting materials for it. This was in September, 1837.[1]

Thinks of a Life of Molière.

It was not difficult to do all he desired. I advised with M. Jules Taschereau,[2] who, besides his other claims on the republic of letters, had then recently published the second edition of his "Life of Molière," — altogether the best book on its subject, though with an air of greater learning than might have been anticipated from the brilliant character of the genius to whom it is devoted. Having made sure of the assistance of Mr. Taschereau, I at once undertook the commission, and wrote to my friend how I proposed to execute it. He replied in the postscript to a letter already extending to four sheets, which he thus characterizes: —

M. Taschereau.

"My letter resembles one of those old *higglety-pigglety* houses that have been so much tinkered and built upon that one hardly knows the front from the rear. I have got to-day your letter of November 24th, — a kind letter, showing that you are, as you always have been ever since you came into the world, thinking how you can best serve your friends. I am truly obliged by your interest in the little Molière purchases, and, if anything occurs to you of value that I have omitted, pray order it. . . . . My design is to write a notice of his life and works, which, without pretence (for it would be but pretence) to critical skill in the French language or drama, would make an agreeable book for the parlor table. . . . . As the thing, in my prosy way, would take two or three years, I don't care to speak of it to any one else.

"But my heart is set on a Spanish subject, could I compass the materials, viz. the Conquest of Mexico, and the anterior civilization of the Mexicans, — a

Prefers a Spanish subject.

[1] He had, somewhat earlier, a considerable fancy for literary history, of which he often spoke to me. When he was half through the composition of his "Ferdinand and Isabella," and hastening to finish it, he recorded: "But, after all, literary history is more consonant with my taste, my turn of mind, and all my previous studies. The sooner I complete my present work, the sooner I shall be enabled to enter upon it. So *festina*."

[2] Now (1862) the head of the Imperial Library at Paris.

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beautiful proſe epic, for which rich virgin materials teem in Simancas and Madrid, and probably in Mexico. I would give a couple of thouſand dollars that they lay in a certain attic in Bedford Street. But how can I compaſs it in theſe troubled times, — too troubled, it would ſeem, for old Navarrete to follow down the ſtream of ſtory, which he has carried to the very time of Cortés." [3]

The reſult of the matter was, that I ſent him a collection of about fifty volumes, which, for anybody who wiſhed to write a pleaſant life of Molière, left little to be deſired, and nothing for one whoſe purpoſe was general literary criticiſm, rather than curious biographical or bibliographical reſearch. But before he had received the purchaſe I had thus made for him, the ſucceſs of his "Ferdinand and Iſabella" had happily turned his attention again to the Spaniſh ſubject, which lay neareſt his heart. On the ſixth of April, he wrote to me concerning both the "Mexico" and the "Molière," telling me, at the ſame time, of a pleaſant acquaintance he had made, which promiſed much to favor his Spaniſh project, and which, in the end, did a great deal more, giving him a kind, true, and important friend.

Succeſs of the "Ferdinand and Iſabella."

"I have been much gratified," he ſays, "by the manner in which the book has been received by more than one intelligent Spaniard here, in particular by the Spaniſh Miniſter, Don Angel Calderon de la Barca, who has ſent me a preſent of books, and expreſſes his intention of tranſlating my Hiſtory into Caſtilian. In conſequence of this, as well as to obtain his aſſiſtance for the other crotchets I have in my head, I paid a viſit to New York laſt week, — a momentous affair, for it would be eaſier for you to go to Conſtantinople. Well, I ſaw his *Spaniſh-ſhip*, and was very much pleaſed with him, — a frank, manly *caballero*, who has reſigned his office from a refuſal to ſubſcribe the late democratic conſtitution. He is quite an accompliſhed man, and in correſpondence with the principal Spaniſh ſcholars at home, ſo that he will be of obvious uſe to me in any project I may have hereafter. He told me he had ſent a copy of the work to the Royal

Don Angel Calderon.

[3] He refers to the remarkable work — mainly documentary — entitled "Coleccion de Viages y Deſcubrimientos que hicieron por Mar los Eſpañoles deſde fines del Siglo XV. coordinada é iluſtrada por Don Martin Fernandez de Navarrete." Madrid, 1825 – 37. 5 Tomos, 4to. It begins, of courſe, with Columbus; but it comes down only to Loaiſa and Saavedra, without touching the expedition of Cortés for the conqueſt of Mexico; or even approaching that of the Pizarros for the conqueſt of Peru. The manuſcript materials for both of theſe, however, as we ſhall ſee hereafter, were placed by Navarrete, who had collected them for publication, with true Spaniſh generoſity, at the diſpoſition of Mr. Preſcott.

Academy of Hiſtory, and ſhould preſent one to the Queen, if he had not retired from office. There's a feather in my cap!

"In New York I ſaw your old friends the L——s, and paſſed an evening with them. It is ten years to a month ſince I was there with you.....

"The New-Yorkers have done the handſome thing by me, — that is, the book. But ſink the ſhop! I have doſed you and Anna with quite enough of it. The truth is, I always talk to you and Anna as I ſhould to my own fleſh and blood; and if you do not ſo take it, I ſhall make a pretty ridiculous figure in your eyes. But I will venture it.

Books on Molière.

"I believe I have not written to you ſince the arrival of the French books [about Molière] all ſafe and ſound. Never was there ſo much *multum* in ſo little *parvo*, — and then the '*damage*' a mere *bagatelle*. How much am I obliged to you, not only for thinking, but for thinking in the right place and manner, for me, and for acting as well as thinking. I begin to believe I have Fortunatus's wiſhing-cap while you are in Europe. For that reaſon, perhaps, I ſhould ſhow more conſcience in putting the ſaid wiſhing-cap on my head. Well, the wiſh I have neareſt at heart, God knows, is to ſee you and Anna and the *petites* ſafe on this ſide of the water again. And that will come to paſs, too, before long. You will find us a few years older. Father Time has thinned out the looſe hairs from ſome craniums, and ſhaken his vile dredging-box over others. For myſelf, I have turned forty, ſince you went away, — an ugly corner that takes a man into the ſhadow of life, as it were. But better be in the ſhadow with the friends you love, than keep in the everlaſting ſunſhine of youth, — if that were poſſible, — and ſee them go down into the valley without you. One does not feel his progreſs, when all around is going on at the ſame rate. I ſhall not, however, give up entirely my claims to be reckoned young, ſince a newspaper this very week ſtyles me 'our young and modeſt townsman.' I ſuppoſe you will admit one epithet to be as true as the other."

Growing older.

As we have ſeen, the period that followed the publication of "Ferdinand and Iſabella" was not fruitful in literary reſults. Except a pleaſant article on Lockhart's "Life of Scott," which he prepared for the "North American Review," he wrote nothing during that winter, — not even his accuſtomed private memoranda. No doubt, he was, in one ſenſe, idle, and he more than once ſpoke of theſe months afterwards with regret and pain; but the vacation, though a pretty long one, ſeems not to have been entirely amiſs in its occupations or its conſequences. He read, or rather liſtened to much reading; light and miſcellaneous in general, but not always ſo. Sometimes, indeed, during his protracted holidays, it was of the graveſt ſort; for, while his work was going through the preſs, he

Review of Lockhart's Life of Scott.

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Truth of Chriſtianity.

occupied himſelf again with careful inquiries into the authority and doctrines of the Chriſtian religion. He read Marſh on the origin of the firſt three Goſpels in his Prolegomena to the tranſlation of "Michaelis"; the firſt volume — being all then publiſhed — of Norton's "Genuineneſs of the Goſpels," to whoſe learning and power he bore teſtimony in a note to the "Ferdinand and Iſabella"; Newcome's "Harmony"; Paley's "Evidences"; Middleton's "Free Inquiry"; and Gibbon's famous chapters, — works the laſt three of which he had conſidered and ſtudied before. A little later he read Norton's "Statement of Reaſons," and Furneſs on the Four Goſpels; but he did not go as thoroughly as he had in his previous inquiries into the orthodox doctrines, as they are called; for, as he ſaid, he was more and more ſatisfied that they were unfounded. After expreſſing himſelf decidedly on theſe points, and coming to the general concluſion that "the ſtudy of polemics or biblical critics will tend neither to ſettle principles nor clear up doubts, but rather to confuſe the former and multiply the latter," he concludes with theſe ſtriking words: —

Religious convictions.

"To do well and act juſtly, to fear and to love God, and to love our neighbor as ourſelves, — in theſe is the eſſence of religion. To do this is the ſafeſt, our only ſafe courſe. For what we can believe, we are not reſponſible, ſuppoſing we examine candidly and patiently. For what we do, we ſhall indeed be accountable. The doctrines of the Saviour unfold the whole code of morals by which our conduct ſhould be regulated. Who, then, whatever difficulties he may meet with in particular incidents and opinions recorded in the Goſpels, can heſitate to receive the great religious and moral truths inculcated by the Saviour as the *words of inſpiration?* I cannot, certainly. On theſe, then, I will reſt, and for all elſe

'Wait the great teacher Death, and God adore.'"

When he had come to the concluſion that the "Ferdinand and Iſabella" was a ſucceſsful book, and likely to laſt, — a reſult at which he arrived very ſlowly, — he abandoned the idea of writing the Life of Molière, and turned, with a decided purpoſe, to the Hiſtory of the Conqueſt of Mexico, which had been, for ſome time, intereſting and tempting him in a way not to be reſiſted. One cauſe of his long heſitation

was the doubt he felt whether he could obtain the materials that he deemed neceſſary for the work. He had written for them to Madrid, in April, 1838; but before a reply could reach him, weary of a vacation which, reckoning from the time when he finiſhed the compoſition of "Ferdinand and Iſabella," was now protracted to nearly two years, and quite ſure that on all accounts he ought to be at work again, he began cautiouſly to enter on his new ſubject with ſuch books as he could command.[4]

In June he records that he had read with much care Humboldt's "Reſearches concerning the Inſtitutions of the Ancient Inhabitants of America," and his "New Spain." It was his earlieſt acquaintance with the works of this great man, except that, when writing an account of the firſt voyage of Columbus for his "Ferdinand and Iſabella," he had reſorted to that mine of knowledge and philoſophy, the "Examen Critique de l'Hiſtoire et de la Géographie du Nouveau Continent."[5] The two works he now ſtudied are, however, in ſome reſpects, of more ſignificance, and he thus notes his opinion of them: —

Humboldt.

"Humboldt is a true philoſopher, diveſted of local or national prejudices, fortified with uncommon learning, which ſupplies him with abundant illuſtrations and analogies. Like moſt truly learned men, he is cautious and modeſt in his deductions, and, though he aſſembles very many remarkable coincidences between the Old World and the New in their inſtitutions, notions, habits, &c., yet he does not infer that the New World was peopled from the Old, — much leſs from what particular nation, as more raſh ſpeculators have done."

The notes to his "Conqueſt of Mexico" abound in ſimilar expreſſions of admiration for the great traveller; a man who, as an obſerver of nature, was once ſaid by Biot (a competent judge, if anybody was) to have been equalled by none ſince the days of Ariſtotle.

But though my friend was much intereſted in theſe works,

[4] He felt the need of a grave ſubject, and of ſucceſs in it, as, I think, he always did after he had once begun his hiſtorical career. "Mere ephemeral ſucceſs," he records in 1838, "ſtill leſs paltry profit, will not content me, I am confident."

[5] Ferdinand and Iſabella, Part I. Chap. XVI., notes.

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Hesitations.

and, during the year 1838, read or ran over many others of less moment relating to the geography and physical condition of that part of America to which they relate, he did not yet begin to labor in earnest on his "Conquest of Mexico." In September, his disinclination to work was very strong.

"I have been indolent," he says, "the last fortnight. It is not easy to go forward without the steady impulse of a definite object. In the uncertainty as to the issue of my application in Spain, I am without such impulse. I ought always to find sufficient in the general advantages resulting from study to my mental resources, — advantages to be felt on whatever subject my mind is engaged. But I am resolved to mend, and to employ all the hours my reader is with me, and something more, when my eye will serve. Of one thing I am persuaded. No motives but those of an honest fame and of usefulness will have much weight in stimulating my labors. I never shall be satisfied to do my work in a slovenly way, nor superficially. It would be impossible for me to do the job-work of a literary hack. Fortunately, I am not obliged to write for bread, and I never will write for money."

One anxiety, which had troubled him for a time, was removed in the following winter by the prompt courtesy of Mr. Washington Irving. It was not such an anxiety as would have occurred to everybody under the same circumstances, nor one that would have been always so readily and pleasantly removed as it was in the present case, by the following correspondence: —

MR. PRESCOTT TO MR. IRVING.

Boston, Dec. 31, 1838.

Letter to Washington Irving.

MY DEAR SIR,

If you will allow one to address you so familiarly who has not the pleasure of your personal acquaintance, though he feels as if he had known you for a long time. Our friend Mr. Cogswell,[6] who is here on a short visit, has

[6] The reference here is to Mr. J. G. Cogswell, the well-known head of the Astor Library, New York, to whose disinterestedness, enthusiasm, and knowledge that important institution owes hardly less of its character and success than it does to the elder Mr. Astor, whose munificence founded it, or to the younger Mr. Astor, who, in the same spirit, has sustained it and increased its resources. Mr. Cogswell, from his youth, was intimate in the Prescott family, and always much cherished by every member of it; so that, being on equally intimate and affectionate terms with Mr. Irving, he was the best possible person to arrange such a delicate affair between the parties.

mentioned to me a converſation which he had with you reſpecting the deſign I had formed of giving an account of the Conqueſt of Mexico and Peru. I hope you will excuſe me if I tell you how the matter ſtands with me.

Adventures of Cortés and Pizarro as ſubjects.

Soon after I had deſpatched their Catholic Highneſſes, Ferdinand and Iſabella, I found the want of my old companions in the long hours of an idle man's life, and, as I looked round for ſomething elſe, the Hiſtory of Cortés and Pizarro ſtruck me as the beſt ſubject, from its growing out of the period I had become familiar with, as well as from its relation to our own country. I found, too, that I had peculiar facilities for getting ſuch books and manuſcripts as I needed from Madrid, through the kindneſs of Señor Calderon, whom you know.

The only doubts I had on the ſubject were reſpecting your deſigns in the ſame way, ſince you had already written the adventures of the early diſcoverers. I thought of writing to you, to learn from you your intentions, but I was afraid it might ſeem impertinent in a ſtranger to pry into your affairs. I made inquiries, however, of ſeveral of your friends, and could not learn that you had any purpoſe of occupying yourſelf with the ſubject; and, as you had never made any public intimation of the ſort, I believe, and ſeveral years had elapſed ſince your laſt publication of the kind, during which your attention had been directed in another channel, I concluded that you had abandoned the intention, if you had ever formed it.

Preparations for his work on Mexico.

I made up my mind, therefore, to go on with it, and, as I propoſed to give a pretty thorough preliminary view of the ſtate of civilization in Mexico and Peru previous to the Conqueſt, I determined to ſpare no pains or expenſe in collecting materials. I have remitted three hundred pounds to Madrid for the purchaſe and copying of books and manuſcripts, and have alſo ſent for Lord Kingſborough's and ſuch other works relating to Mexico as I can get from London.[7] I have alſo obtained letters to individuals in Mexico for the purpoſe of collecting what may be of importance to me there. Some of the works from London have arrived, and the drafts from Madrid ſhow that my orders are executing there. Such works as can be got here in a pretty good collection in the College library I have already examined, and wait only for my books from Spain.

Anxiety not to interfere with Mr. Irving.

This is the ſtate of affairs now that I have learned from Mr. C. that you had originally propoſed to treat the ſame ſubject, and that you requeſted him to ſay to me, that you ſhould relinquiſh it in my favor. I cannot ſufficiently expreſs to you my ſenſe of your courteſy, which I can very well appreciate, as I know the mortification it would have cauſed me, if, contrary to my expectations, I had found you on the ground; for I am but a dull ſailer from the embarraſſments I labor under, and ſhould have found but ſorry gleanings in the field which you had thoroughly burnt over, as they ſay in the Weſt. I fear the public will not feel ſo much pleaſed as myſelf by this liberal conduct on your part, and I am not ſure that I ſhould have a right in their eyes to avail myſelf

7 This he had done about nine months earlier.

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of it.[8] But I truſt you will think differently when I accept your proffered courteſy in the ſame cordial ſpirit in which it was given.

It will be conferring a ſtill further favor on me, if you will allow me occaſionally, when I may find the want of it, to aſk your advice in the progreſs of the work. There are few perſons among us who have paid much attention to theſe ſtudies, and no one, here or elſewhere, is ſo familiar as yourſelf with the track of Spaniſh adventure in the New World and ſo well qualified certainly to give advice to a comparatively raw hand. Do not fear that this will expoſe you to a troubleſome correſpondence. I have never been addicted to much letter-writing, though, from the ſpecimen before you, I am afraid you will think thoſe I do write are ſomewhat of the longeſt.

Believe me, dear Sir, with great reſpect,

Your obliged and obedient ſervant,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

P. S. Will you permit me to ſay, that if you have any materials in your own library having a bearing on this ſubject, that cannot be got here, and that you have no occaſion for yourſelf, it will be a great favor if you will diſpoſe of them to me.

MR. IRVING TO MR. PRESCOTT.

New York, Jan. 18, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,

Letter of Mr. Irving to Mr. Preſcott.

Your letter met with ſome delay in reaching me, and ſince the receipt of it I have been hovering between town and country, ſo as to have had no quiet leiſure for an earlier reply.

I had always intended to write an account of the "Conqueſt of Mexico," as a ſuite to my "Columbus," but left Spain without making the requiſite reſearches. The unſettled life I ſubſequently led for ſome years, and the interruptions to my literary plans by other occupations, made me defer the undertaking from year to year. Indeed, the more I conſidered the ſubject, the more I became aware of the neceſſity of devoting to it great labor, patient reſearch, and watchful diſcrimination, to get at the truth, and to diſpel the magnificent *mirage* with which it is enveloped. For, unleſs this were done, a work, however well executed in point of literary merit, would be liable to be ſubverted and ſuperſeded by ſubſequent works, grounded on thoſe documentary evidences that might be dug out of the chaotic archives of Spain. Theſe conſiderations loomed into great obſtacles in my mind, and, amidſt the hurry of other matters, delayed me in putting my hand to the enterpriſe.

Difficulties of writing on the ſubject of Mexico.

[8] A ſimilar idea is very gracefully expreſſed in the Preface to the Conqueſt of Mexico, where, after relating the circumſtance of Mr. Irving's relinquiſhment of the ſubject, Mr. Preſcott adds: "While I do but juſtice to Mr. Irving by this ſtatement, I feel the prejudice it does to myſelf in the unavailing regret I am exciting in the boſom of the reader."

About three years ſince I made an attempt at it, and ſet one of my nephews to act as pioneer and get together materials under my direction, but his own concerns called him elſewhere, and the matter was again poſtponed. Laſt autumn, after a fit of deep depreſſion, feeling the want of ſomething to rouſe and exerciſe my mind, I again recurred to this ſubject. Fearing that, if I waited to collect materials, I ſhould never take hold of them, and knowing my own temperament and habits of mind, I determined to daſh into it at once; ſketch out a narrative of the whole enterpriſe, uſing Solis, Herrera, and Bernal Diaz as my guide-books; and, having thus acquainted myſelf with the whole ground, and kindled myſelf into a heat by the exerciſe of drafting the ſtory, to endeavor to ſtrengthen, correct, direct, and authenticate my work by materials from every ſource within my reach.

Attempts it.

I accordingly ſet to work, and had made it my daily occupation for about three months, and ſketched out the groundwork for the firſt volume, when I learned from Mr. Cogſwell that you had undertaken the ſame enterpriſe. I at once felt how much more juſtice the ſubject would receive at your hands. Ever ſince I had been meddling with the theme, its grandeur and magnificence had been growing upon me, and I had felt more and more doubtful whether I ſhould be able to treat it *conſcientiouſly*, — that is to ſay, with the extenſive reſearch and thorough inveſtigation which it merited. The hiſtory of Mexico prior to the diſcovery and conqueſt, and the actual ſtate of its civilization at the time of the Spaniſh invaſion, are queſtions in the higheſt degree curious and intereſting, yet difficult to be aſcertained clearly from the falſe lights thrown upon them. Even the writings of Padre Sahagun perplex one as to the degree of faith to be placed in them. Theſe themes are connected with the grand enigma that reſts upon the primitive population and civilization of the American continent, and of which the ſingular monuments and remains ſcattered throughout the wilderneſs ſerve but as tantalizing indications.

The manner in which you have executed your noble "Hiſtory of Ferdinand and Iſabella" gave me at once an aſſurance that you were the man to undertake the ſubject. Your letter ſhows that I was not wrong in the conviction, and that you have already ſet to work on the requiſite preparations. In at once yielding up the thing to you, I feel that I am but doing my duty in leaving one of the moſt magnificent themes in American hiſtory to be treated by one who will build up from it an enduring monument in the literature of our country. I only hope that I may live to ſee your work executed, and to read in it an authentic account of that conqueſt, and a ſatisfactory diſcuſſion of the various queſtions which ſince my boyhood have been full of romantic charm to me, but which, while they excited my imagination, have ever perplexed my judgment.

Gives it up.

I am ſorry that I have no works to offer you, that you have not in the Boſton libraries. I have mentioned the authors I was making uſe of. They are to be found in the Boſton Athenæum, though I doubt not you have them in your own poſſeſſion. While in Madrid, I had a few chapters of Padre Sahagun copied out for me, relating merely to ſome points of the Spaniſh invaſion. His work you will find in Lord Kingſborough's collection. It profeſſes to give a

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complete account of Mexico prior to the conqueſt, its public inſtitutions, trades, callings, cuſtoms, &c., &c. Should I find among my books any that may be likely to be of ſervice, I will ſend them to you. In the mean time do not heſitate to command my ſervices in any way you may think proper.

I am ſcrawling this letter in great haſte, as you will doubtleſs perceive, but beg you will take it as a proof of the ſincere and very high reſpect and eſteem with which I am

Your friend and ſervant,

WASHINGTON IRVING.[9]

MR. PRESCOTT TO MR. IRVING.

Boſton, Jan. 25, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,

You will be alarmed at again ſeeing an epiſtle from me ſo ſoon, but I cannot refrain from replying to your very kind communication. I have read your letter with much intereſt, and — I may truly ſay, as to that part of it which animadverts on the importance of the theme, as illuſtrating the Mexican Antiquities — with ſome diſmay. I fear you will be ſadly diſappointed, if you expect to ſee a ſolution by me of thoſe vexed queſtions which have bewildered the brains of ſo many profeſſed antiquarians. My fingers are too clumſy to unravel ſuch a ſnarl. All I propoſe to do in this part of the ſubject is, to preſent the reader ſuch a view of the inſtitutions and civilization of the conquered people as will intereſt him in their fortunes. To do this, it will not be neceſſary, I hope, to involve myſelf in thoſe miſty ſpeculations which require better ſight than mine to penetrate, but only to ſtate facts as far as they can be gathered from authentic ſtory.

Alarm about the ſubject of Mexico.

Materials wanted.

For this part of the ſubject, therefore, I have not attempted to collect manuſcripts, of which I ſuppoſe there is a great number in the libraries of Mexico, — at leaſt, there was in Clavigero's time, — but I ſhall content myſelf with the examination of ſuch works as have been before the public, including, indeed, the compilation of Lord Kingſborough, and the great French work, "Antiquités Mexicaines," ſince publiſhed, the chief value of both of which, I ſuſpect, except the chronicle of Sahagun in the former, conſiſts in their pictorial illuſtrations. My chief object is the Conqueſt, and the materials I am endeavoring to collect are with the view to the exhibition of this in the moſt authentic light.

[9] How Mr. Preſcott felt on receiving this letter, may be ſeen from the following note encloſing it to me, the day it came to hand: —

January 21ſt.

MIO CARISSIMO,

I told you that I wrote to Irving, thanking him for his courteſy the other day. Here is his reſponſe, which I thought you would like to ſee. He puts me into a fright, by the terrible reſponſibilities he throws on the ſubject, or rather on the man who meddles with it.

Ever thine,

W. H. PRESCOTT.

Books and manuſcripts from Madrid.

Dr. Lembke.

It will give you ſatisfaction to learn that my efforts in Spain promiſe to be attended with perfect ſucceſs. I received letters laſt week from Madrid, informing me that the Academy of Hiſtory, at the inſtance of Señor Navarrete, had granted my application to have copies taken of any and all manuſcripts in their poſſeſſion having relation to the Conqueſt of Mexico and Peru, and had appointed one of their body to carry this into effect. This perſon is a German, named Lembke, the author of a work on the early hiſtory of Spain, which one of the Engliſh journals, I remember, rapped me over the knuckles for not having ſeen.[10] This learned Theban happens to be in Madrid for the nonce, purſuing ſome inveſtigations of his own, and he has taken charge of mine, like a true German, inſpecting everything and ſelecting juſt what has reference to my ſubject. In this way he has been employed with four copyiſts ſince July, and has amaſſed a quantity of unpubliſhed documents illuſtrative of the Mexican Conqueſt, which, he writes me, will place the expedition in a new and authentic light. He has already ſent off two boxes to Cadiz, and is now employed in hunting up the materials relating to Peru, in which, he ſays, the Library appears to be equally rich. I wiſh he may not be too ſanguine, and that the manuſcripts may not fall into the hands of Carliſt or Chriſtino, who would probably work them up into muſket-waddings in much leſs time than they were copying

The ſpecifications of manuſcripts, furniſhed me by Dr. Lembke, make me feel nearly independent of Mexico, with which the communications are now even more obſtructed than with Spain. I have endeavored to open them, however, through Mr. Poinſett and the Meſſrs. Barings, and cannot but hope I ſhall ſucceed through one or the other channel.

I had no idea of your having looked into the ſubject ſo cloſely yourſelf, ſtill leſs that you had ſo far broken ground on it. I regret now that I had not communicated with you earlier in a direct way, as it might have ſaved both, or rather one of us, ſome previous preparation; for during the ſummer and autumn I have been occupied with the inveſtigation of the early Mexican hiſtory, having explored all the ſources within my reach here, and being ſtopped by the want of [more of] them.

Thanks to Mr. Irving.

Now that I have gone on ſo far with my preparations, I can only acknowledge your great courteſy towards me with my hearty thanks, for I know well that whatever advantage I might have acquired on the ſcore of materials would have been far — very far — outweighed by the ſuperiority in all other reſpects of what might fall from your pen. And your relinquiſhing the ground ſeems to

[10] Geſchichte von Spanien, von Friederich Wilhelm Lembke, Erſter Band. Hamburg, 1831, 8vo. It goes no farther than about the year A.D. 800, and therefore could not have been of the leaſt importance to one writing the Hiſtory of Ferdinand and Iſabella, who lived ſeven hundred years later. Dr. Lembke, indeed, rendered good ſervice to Mr. Preſcott in collecting the materials for the "Conqueſts" of Mexico and Peru; but he wrote no more of his own Hiſtory of Spain, which was, however, continued by Heinrich Schäfer, down to about 1100, — a period ſtill far from that of the Catholic Sovereigns, — beſides which Schäfer's work did not appear until 1844, ſix years after the appearance of the "Ferdinand and Iſabella." So much for the *clairvoyance* of the Engliſh journaliſt.

impose on me an additional responsibility, to try to make your place good, from which a stouter heart than mine might well shrink. I trust, however, that in you I shall find a generous critic, and allow me to add, with sincerity, that the kind words you have said of the only child of my brain have gratified me, and touched me more deeply than anything that has yet reached me from my countrymen.

Believe me, my dear sir,

With sincere respect,

Your friend and servant,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

Since writing this chapter, and, in fact, since this work itself was finished and sent to press, the third volume of the charming "Life and Letters of Washington Irving, by his Nephew, Pierre M. Irving," has been published. It contains the following additional interesting facts upon the subject of the Conquest of Mexico: —

"Mr. Irving," says his biographer, "was now busy upon the History of the Conquest of Mexico, and it was upon this theme that he was exercising that 'vein of literary occupation' alluded to at the close of the foregoing letter [to Mrs. Van Wart, his sister]. He had not only commenced the work, but had made a rough draught to form the groundwork of the first volume, when he went to New York to procure or consult some books on the subject. He was engaged in the 'City Library,' as it is commonly designated, though its official style is 'The New York Society Library,' then temporarily in Chambers Street, when he was accosted by Mr. Joseph G. Cogswell, the eminent scholar, afterward so long and honorably connected with the Astor Library. It was from this gentleman that Mr. Irving first learned that Mr. Prescott, who had a few months before gained a proud name on both sides of the Atlantic, by his 'History of Ferdinand and Isabella,' now had the work in contemplation upon which he had actively commenced. Cogswell first sounded him, on the part of Mr. Prescott, to know what subject he was occupied upon, as he did not wish to come again across the same ground with him. Mr. Irving asked, 'Is Mr. Prescott engaged upon an American subject?' 'He is,' was the reply. 'What is it? Is it the Conquest of Mexico?' 'It is,' answered Cogswell. 'Well then,' said Mr. Irving, 'I *am* engaged upon that subject; but tell Mr. Prescott I abandon it to him, and I am happy to have this opportunity of testifying my high esteem for his talents and my sense of the very courteous manner in which he has spoken of myself and my writings, in his "Ferdinand and Isabella," though they interfered with a part of the subject of his history.'"

About five years later, Mr. Irving, then our Minister in Spain, received from Mr. Prescott a copy of his "History of the Conquest of Mexico," in the Preface to which he makes his public acknowledgment to Mr. Irving for giving up the subject.

How Mr. Irving received it will appear from the following account by his biographer. "'I need not say,' writes Mr. Irving to me, in noticing its receipt, 'how much I am delighted with the work. It well sustains the high reputation acquired by the History of Ferdinand and Isabella.' Then, adverting to the terms of Mr. Prescott's handsome acknowledgment in the Preface, to which I had called his attention, he adds: 'I doubt whether Mr. Prescott was aware of the extent of the sacrifice I made. This was a favorite subject, which had delighted my imagination ever since I was a boy. I had brought home

books from Spain to aid me in it, and looked upon it as the pendant to my Columbus. When I gave it up to him, I, in a manner, gave him up my bread; for I depended upon the profit of it to recruit my waning finances. I had no other subject at hand to supply its place. I was dismounted from my *cheval de bataille*, and have never been completely mounted since. Had I accomplished that work, my whole pecuniary situation would have been altered. . . . . When I made the sacrifice, it was not with a view to compliments or thanks, but from a warm and sudden impulse. I am not sorry for having made it. Mr. Prescott has justified the opinion I expressed at the time, that he would treat the subject with more close and ample research than I should probably do, and would produce a work more thoroughly worthy of the theme. He has produced a work that does honor to himself and his country, and I wish him the full enjoyment of his laurels.' " — Life of Irving, 1863, Vol. III. pp. 133 sqq., and 143 sqq.

There are few so beautiful passages as this in literary history, deformed as it often is with the jealousies and quarrels of authorship. One, however, not unlike it will be found subsequently in this volume, when we come to the relations between the author of the "History of Philip the Second," and the author of "The Rise of the Dutch Republic."

CHAPTER XIV.

1839 – 1842.

His Correſpondence becomes Important. — Letter to Irving. — Letters from Siſmondi, Thierry, Tytler, and Rogers. — Letter to Gayangos. — Memoranda. — Letters to Gayangos, and others. — Letters from Ford and Tytler.

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Earlier, wrote few letters.

UNTIL ſome time after the appearance of "Ferdinand and Iſabella," Mr. Preſcott wrote very few letters to anybody, and moſt of thoſe he did write are loſt. He correſponded, of courſe, with his family, in 1816 and 1817, when he was in Europe, and he wrote ſubſequently to one or two perſonal and houſehold friends, whenever he or they happened to be away from Boſton. Theſe letters, ſo far as they have been preſerved, I have uſed in the preceding narrative. But his life, though he was much in ſociety in Boſton, was — both from preference and from his peculiar infirmities — in one ſenſe very retired. He travelled hardly at all, thinking that the expoſures involved by journeys injured his eye, and therefore the occaſions on which he wrote letters to his family were very rare. At the ſame time, his urgent and ſteady occupations made it difficult for him to write to others, ſo that he had no regular correſpondence from 1818 to 1839 with any ſingle perſon. In one of the few letters that he wrote before he became known as an author, he ſays that in the

preceding three months he had written to but two perſons, — to both on buſineſs; and in another letter, equally on buſineſs, but written a little later, he ſays, that the friend to whom it was addreſſed would "hardly know what to make of it" that he ſhould write to him at all.

Private Memoranda.

With his private memoranda, begun in 1820, and continued to the laſt, ſo as to fill above twelve hundred pages, the caſe is ſomewhat different, although the reſult is nearly the ſame. Ample enough they certainly are from the firſt, and, for their private purpoſes, they are both apt and ſufficient. But nearly or quite the whole of the earlier two thirds of this minute record is filled with an account of his daily ſtudies, of his good reſolutions, often broken, and of his plans for the future, often diſappointed. Such records were from their nature only for himſelf, and only of tranſient intereſt even to him.

But after the ſucceſs of the "Ferdinand and Iſabella," his relations to the world were changed, and ſo, in ſome degree, were his hopes and purpoſes in life. While, therefore, until that time, his correſpondence and Memoranda furniſh few materials for his life, they conſtitute afterwards not only the beſt, but the largeſt, part of whatever may be needful to exhibit him as he really was. I begin, therefore, at once with the letters and Memoranda of 1839, for, although ſome of them look much ahead, and talk about his "Hiſtory of Philip the Second," while he was yet buſy with the "Conqueſt of Mexico," and before he had even taken in hand that of Peru, ſtill they ſhow what, at the time, were his occupations and thoughts, and give proof of the providence and forecaſt which always conſtituted important traits in his character, and contributed much to his ſucceſs in whatever he undertook.

Increaſe of correſpondence.

The firſt of his letters belonging to this period is one containing his views on a ſubject which has by no means yet loſt the whole of its intereſt as a public queſtion, — that of international copyright.

TO WASHINGTON IRVING.

Boston, Dec. 24, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,

I received some weeks since a letter from Dr. Lieber, of Columbia College, South Carolina, in which he informed me, that measures were to be taken in Congress, this session, for making such an alteration in our copyright law as should secure the benefits of it to foreigners, and thus enable us to profit in turn by theirs. He was very desirous that I should write, if I could not see you personally, and request your co-operation in the matter. I felt very reluctant to do so, knowing that you must be much better acquainted than I was with the state of the affair, and, of course, could judge much better what was proper to be done. My indefatigable correspondent, however, has again written to me, pressing the necessity of communicating with you, and stating in confidence, as he says, that Mr. Clay is to bring in a bill this session, and that Mr. Preston [1] is to make the speech, &c. Mr. Preston told him that it would be very desirable to have a brief memorial, signed by the persons most interested in the success of the law, and that you were the proper person to prepare it. If anything be done, there can be no doubt that you are the one who, from your literary position in the country, should take the lead in it. Whether anything effectual can be done seems to me very doubtful.

Law of copyright.

Such a law is certainly demanded by every principle of justice. But I suspect it is rather late in the day to talk of justice to statesmen. At all events, one of those newspapers which they are now turning out every week here, and which contains an octavo volume of the new publications, at sixpence apiece, will, I am afraid, be too cogent an argument in favor of the present state of things, to be refuted by the best memorial ever drafted. Still we can but try, and, while the effort is making by the best men in Congress, it may be our duty to try.

Of all this, however, you can best judge. I can only say, that, if you will prepare a paper, I shall be very glad, when it has been signed in your city, to do all in my power to get such signatures to it here as will give it most weight. I trust I shall not appear to you officious in this matter, for I can well understand, from my own feelings, how distasteful this sort of work must be to you.

It will give you pleasure, I flatter myself, to know that I have completely succeeded in my negotiations in Spain. Señor Navarrete, with whom you were acquainted in Madrid, has very liberally supplied me with copies of his entire collection of manuscripts relating to Mexico and Peru, which it is improbable from his advanced age that he will ever publish himself. Through his aid I have also obtained from the Academy copies of the collections made by Muñoz and by its former President, Vargas y Ponce, making all together some five thousand pages, all in fair condition, — the flower of my Spanish veterans.

Spanish manuscripts.

From Mexico, through my good friend Calderon, who is now gone there, you

Don Angel Calderon.

[1] William C. Preston, then in the Senate of the United States from South Carolina.

know, as miniſter, I look for further ammunition, — though I am pretty independent of that now. I have found ſome difficulty in collecting the materials for the preliminary view I propoſe of the Aztec civilization. The works are expenſive, and Lord Kingſborough's is locked up in chancery. I have ſucceeded, however, in ferreting out a copy, which, to ſay truth, though eſſential, has ſomewhat diſappointed me. The whole of that part of the ſtory is in twilight, and I fear I ſhall at leaſt make only moonſhine of it. I muſt hope that it will be good moonſhine. It will go hard with me, however, but that I can fiſh ſomething new out of my ocean of manuſcripts. Aztecs.

As I have only half an eye of my own, and that more for ſhow than uſe, my progreſs is neceſſarily no more than a ſnail's gallop. I ſhould be very glad to ſhow you my literary wares, but I fear you are too little of a locomotive in your habits to afford me that great pleaſure. Though I cannot ſee you bodily, however, I am ſitting under the light of your countenance, — for you are ranged above me (your immortal part) in a goodly row of octavos, — not in the home-ſpun garb, but in the nice coſtume of Albemarle and Burlington Streets.

My copy of the Sketch-Book, by the by, is the one owned by Sir James Mackintoſh, and with his pencillings in the margin. It was but laſt evening that my little girl read us one of the ſtories, which had juſt enough of the myſterious to curdle the blood in the veins of her younger brother, who ſtopped up both his ears, ſaying he "would not hear ſuch things juſt as he was going to bed," and as our aſſertions that no harm would come of it were all in vain, we were obliged to ſend the urchin off to his quarters with, I fear, no very grateful feelings towards the author. Sketch-Book.

At about the ſame time that he wrote thus to Mr. Irving, he received three letters from eminent hiſtorians, which gave him much pleaſure. The firſt is

FROM J. C. L. DE SISMONDI.

SIR,

I have juſt received your letter from Boſton, of the 1ſt of July, with the beautiful preſent which accompanies it. It has touched me, it has flattered me, but at the ſame time it has made me experience a very lively regret. I had found on my arrival at Paris, the laſt year, the Engliſh edition of your beautiful work. The addreſs alone had informed me that it was a preſent of the author, and I have never known how it arrived to me. On my return here I wrote you on the 22d of July, to expreſs to you my entire gratitude, the intereſt with which I had ſeen you caſt ſo vivid a light over ſo intereſting a period of the hiſtory of our Europe, my aſtoniſhment at your having attained ſuch rich ſources of learning, which are for the moſt part interdicted to us; my admiration, in fine, for that force of character, and, without doubt, ſerenity of ſpirit, which had aſſiſted you in purſuing your noble enterpriſe under the weight of the greateſt Ferdinand and Iſabella.

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calamity which can attend a man in his organs, and especially a man of letters, — the loss of sight. I do not remember what circumstance made me think that you lived at New York, and it is thither that I directed my letter to you, but I took care to add to your name, "Author of the History of Ferdinand and Isabella," and I represented to myself that your fellow-countrymen ought to be sufficiently proud of your book for the directors of the post of one of your largest cities to know your residence, and send you my letter. It is more than a year since that, and in the interval you have been able to learn how firmly established is the success of your work, and my suffrage has lost the little worth it might have had. I am mortified nevertheless to have been obliged to appear insensible to your kindness. . . . . .

Post-office of the United States.

I cannot believe that, after ten years so usefully, so happily employed, you lay aside the pen. You are now initiated into the History of Spain, and it will be much more easy to continue it than to begin it. After Robertson, after Watson, the shadows thicken upon the Peninsula; will you not dissipate them? Will you not teach us what we have so much need of knowing? Will not you exhibit this decay ever more rapid, from the midst of which you will extract such important lessons? Consider that the more you have given to the public, the more it would have a right to demand of you. Permit me to join my voice to that of the public in this demand, as I have done in applauding what you have already done.

Believe me, with sentiments of the highest consideration,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. C. L. DE SISMONDI.

Chênes, près Genève, Sept. 1, 1839.

The next letter referred to, which is one from the author of the "Histoire de la Conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands," himself quite blind, is very interesting on all accounts.

FROM M. P. AUGUSTIN THIERRY.

MONSIEUR,

Pardonnez moi d'avoir tardé si longtemps à vous remercier du présent que vous avez eu la bonté de me faire. Deux causes ont contribué à ce retard: d'abord j'ai voulu lire en entier votre bel ouvrage, et les aveugles lisent lentement; ensuite j'ai voulu vous envoyer, comme un bien faible retour, deux volumes qui étaient sous presse; je prends la liberté de vous les offrir. Je ne saurais, Monsieur, vous exprimer tout le plaisir que m'a fait la lecture de votre "Histoire du Règne de Ferdinand et d'Isabelle." C'est un de ces livres également remarquables pour le fond et pour la forme, où se montrent à la fois des

Blindness.

études approfondies, une haute raiſon et un grand talent d'écrivain. On ſent que vos recherches ont pénétré au fond du ſujet, que vous avez tout étudié aux ſources, les origines nationales et provinciales, les traditions, les mœurs, les dialectes, la légiſlation, les coutumes ; vos jugements ſur la politique intérieure et extérieure de la monarchie Eſpagnole au 15ème ſiècle ſont d'une grande fermeté et d'une complète impartialité ; enfin il y a dans le récit des évènements cette clarté parfaite, cette gravité ſans effort et ſobrement colorée, qui eſt ſelon moi le vrai ſtyle de l'hiſtoire.

Ferdinand and Iſabella.

Vous avez travaillé ce ſujet avec prédilection, parceque là ſe trouvent les prolégomènes de l'hiſtoire du nouveau monde où votre pays tient la première place ; continuez, Monſieur, à lui élever le monument dont vous venez de poſer la baſe. J'apprends avec peine que votre vue ſe perd de nouveau, mais je ſuis ſans inquiétude pour vos travaux à venir ; vous ferez comme moi, vous répéterez le deviſe du ſtoicien *Suſtine*, *abſtine*, et vous exercerez les yeux de l'âme à défaut des yeux du corps. Croyez, Monſieur, à ma vive ſympathie pour une deſtinée qui ſous ce rapport reſſemble à la mienne et agréez avec mes remerciments bien ſincères l'expreſſion de ma haute eſtime et de mon dévouement

Reſources of the blind.

P. AUG. THIERRY.

Paris, le 17 Mars, 1840.

The laſt of the three letters from writers of hiſtorical reputation is one

FROM PATRICK FRASER TYTLER.

34 Devonſhire Place [London], Monday, Feb. 24, 1840.

MY DEAR SIR,

Ferdinand and Iſabella.

I truſt you will pardon my ſo addreſſing you, but it is impoſſible for me to uſe any colder terms, in acknowledging your letter and the accompanying preſent of your "Hiſtory of Ferdinand and Iſabella." To the high merit of the work, and to the place it has now confeſſedly taken in European literature, I was no ſtranger ; but to receive it as a mark of your approbation and regard, and to be addreſſed from the New World as a brother laborer, greatly enhances the gift. I am indeed much encouraged when I find that anything I have done, or rather attempted to do, has given you pleaſure, becauſe I can ſincerely ſay that I feel the value of your praiſe. You are indeed a lenient critic, and far overrate my labors, but it will, I believe, be generally found that they who know beſt, and have moſt ſucceſsfully overcome, the difficulties of hiſtorical reſearch are the readieſt to think kindly of the efforts of a fellow-laborer.

I truſt that you are again engaged on ſome high hiſtorical ſubject, and ſincerely hope that your employing an amanuenſis is not indicative of any return of that ſevere calamity which you ſo cheerfully and magnanimouſly overcame in your "Ferdinand and Iſabella." At preſent I am intently occupied with the laſt

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volume of my "History of Scotland," which embraces the painful and much-controverted period of Mary. I have been fortunate in recovering many letters and original papers, hitherto unknown, and hope to be able to throw some new light on the obscurer parts of her history; but it is full of difficulty, and I sometimes despair. Such as it is, I shall beg your kind acceptance of it and my other volumes as soon as it is published.

History of Scotland.

Believe me, dear Sir,

With every feeling of respect and regard,

Most truly yours,

PATRICK FRASER TYTLER.

Other letters followed, of which one, characteristic of its author, may be here inserted.

FROM SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

How ungrateful must you have thought me in neglecting so long to thank you for your invaluable present; but, strange as it may be, I really imagined that I had done so in a letter to our excellent friend Mr. Ticknor; and, if I have not expressed what I felt, I have not felt the less; for I cannot tell you the delight with which I have read every page of your History, — a history so happy in the subject, and, what is now a thing almost unknown, so well studied in the execution, — which, wherever it comes, interests old and young, and is nowhere more esteemed than in the cities of Spain. Thinking of it as I must, it can be no small consolation to me to learn that in what I have done, or rather attempted to do, I have given the author any pleasure, early or late. At my age, much as I may wish for it, I have little chance of seeing you, though the distance lessens every day. But I am determined to live, if I can, till you have finished what I understand you are now writing; a noble task, and every way well worthy of you.

"Ferdinand and Isabella."

Pray allow me to subscribe myself

Your much obliged and sincere friend,

SAMUEL ROGERS.

London, March 30, 1840.

The next letter belongs to the important series of those to the Spanish scholar who contributed so much to Mr. Prescott's success in preparing his "History of Philip the Second,"[2] by collecting the larger portion of the materials for it.

[2] See *ante*, p. 111.

TO DON PASCUAL DE GAYANGOS.

Boſton, June 20, 1840.

MY DEAR SIR,

Our friend Ticknor has informed me, that you deſired him to ſay to me, that there are ſome documents in the Britiſh Muſeum relating to Mexico, which may be of value to me. I am extremely obliged and flattered by the friendly intereſt you take in my literary labors, and I ſhall be glad to avail myſelf of the treaſures in the Muſeum. By a letter, dated April 4th, which you muſt have received ere this, I mentioned to you, that I had received a large maſs of manuſcripts from Madrid.[3] As my friend Mr. Sparks, with whoſe high literary reputation you are probably acquainted, is going to London, where he will paſs ſome months, I ſend by him a liſt of the documents which I poſſeſs relating to Mexico and Peru, that I may not receive duplicates of any from the Britiſh Muſeum. If there are others of real value there relating to the *Conqueſts* of theſe two kingdoms, I ſhould be very glad to have copies of them, and Mr. Sparks, whoſe labors will require him to be much in the Britiſh Muſeum, will do whatever you may adviſe in regard to having the copies made, and will forward them to me. I ſhall be very glad if you can get ſome one to ſelect and copy from the correſpondence of Gonſalvo and the Catholic Kings, and Mr. Sparks will reimburſe you for the charges incurred on this account. But I fear, to judge from the ſpecimen you have ſent me, it will not be eaſy to find one capable of reading ſuch hieroglyphical characters as theſe worthy perſons made uſe of.

Manuſcripts in the Britiſh Muſeum.

I am glad to learn from Ticknor that you are on the eve of publiſhing your Spaniſh Hiſtory. You have not mentioned the nature of the work, but I ſuppoſe from the direction of your ſtudies, as far as I underſtand them, it is the Spaniſh-Arabic Hiſtory. If ſo, it is a ſplendid theme, which exhibits the mingled influences of European and Aſiatic civilization, wonderfully picturesque and ſtriking to the imagination. It is a ſubject which, to be properly treated, requires one who has wandered over the ſcenes of faded grandeur, and ſtored his mind with the rich treaſures of the original Arabic. Very few ſcholars are at all competent to the ſubject, and no one will rejoice more than myſelf in ſeeing it fall into your hands. But perhaps I have miſapprehended your work, as in your letter to Mr. Ticknor you merely call it a "Hiſtory of Spain," and I ſhall be obliged by your telling me, when you do me the favor to write, what is the preciſe nature and object of it. Since writing to you, I have received letters from my friend Calderon,[4] the Spaniſh Miniſter at Mexico, communicating ſundry documents, which he has procured for me there, as the public offices have all been thrown open to him. This is very good luck. But the collections I had previouſly from Spain were drawn, in part, from the ſame ſource.

Arabs in Spain.

. . . . .

[3] This letter does not ſeem to have been preſerved.

[4] See *ante*, p. 162.

MEMORANDA.

Auguſt 14, 1840. — General Miller, a very gallant and intelligent Engliſhman, who has filled the higheſt poſts in the revolutionary wars of South America, has been at Nahant the laſt fortnight, and leaves to-morrow. He brought letters to me, and I have derived great benefit as well as pleaſure from his ſociety. He has given me much information reſpecting military matters, and has looked into the accounts of the battles in my work, and pointed out a few inaccuracies.[5]

Assistance of General Miller.

Auguſt 15, 1840. — Monſieur Thierry, the author of the "Conqueſt of England by the Normans," made the following remark in a letter the other day to Ticknor, which I cannot refuſe myſelf the pleaſure of tranſcribing, as it comes from one who is at the head of his art.

"Si je pouvais renouer nos converſations d'il y a deux ans, je ne vous parlerais de la queſtion du Canada, morte aujourd'hui, mais de l'avenir littéraire des États Unis, qui ſemblent vouloir prendre en ce point, comme en tout le reſte, leur revanche ſur la vieille Angleterre. J'ai dit à votre ami M. Preſcott, tout le plaiſir que m'a fait ſon livre. C'eſt un ouvrage étudié à fond ſur les ſources, et parfaitement compoſé. Il y a là autant de talent de ſtyle, et plus de liberté d'eſprit que chez les meilleurs hiſtoriens Anglais."

Ferdinand and Iſabella.

TO DON PASCUAL DE GAYANGOS.

Boſton, Feb. 1, 1841.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

At laſt I have received the welcome preſent of your volume on the "Spaniſh Arabs," and the manuſcripts of the "Great Captain." I cannot ſufficiently expreſs to you my admiration of your work, publiſhed, too, as it ſhould be, in ſo ſplendid a form. It far exceeds the expectations I had entertained, which, however, were great, knowing your own familiarity with the ground.[6] During the few days it has been in my poſſeſſion, I have greedily run over it, as well as my eyes, aided by thoſe of another, would allow, and, though I have travelled over the ground before, as far as Spaniſh writers have cleared the way, I now ſee how much was left obſcure and miſunderſtood, and perverted by the beſt of them. The work you have ſelected for tranſlation is moſt happily choſen, not

History of the Spaniſh Arabs.

[5] General Miller died in South America in 1861, ſixty-ſix years old. An account of the early part of his career was written by his brother, John Miller, of which the ſecond edition was publiſhed at London, in 2 vols., 8vo, 1829. It is an intereſting book, involving a hiſtory of much that was important in the affairs of South America, and was tranſlated into Spaniſh by General Torrijos, well known and much honored in the war of the Peninſula, 1809–1814.

[6] "Hiſtory of the Mohammedan Dynaſties in Spain, from the Arabic of Al-Makkari, tranſlated by Paſcual de Gayangos," 4to, Vol. I., London, 1840; Vol. II., 1843; publiſhed by the "Oriental Tranſlation Fund."

only from its own merits, but from its embodying so many copious extracts from other sources, that it is in itself a sort of abridgment or encyclopædia of the choicest passages relating to the multifarious topics of which it treats. These certainly are of great interest and importance. But your own notes throw a light over the whole, which can only come from a life of previous study in this department.

I wish it had been my good fortune to have had such a guide in my poor attempts among the remains of Arabian Spain. And how much am I gratified to find my own labors, such as they are, noticed by you with the beautiful encomium, which, when I read your learned and accurate pages, I feel I am poorly entitled to. Your book must certainly supersede all that has gone before it on this topic, the learned but unsatisfactory — I did not know how unsatisfactory — labors of Condé, Masdeú, Casíri, Cardonne, &c. You have furnished a clear picture of that Asiatic portion of the Peninsular history without which the European cannot be rightly interpreted or understood. I, of course, have had time only to glance rapidly through these pages, and very imperfectly. I shall return to them with more deliberation, when I come to a good resting-place in my own narrative. I am just bringing my account of the state of the Aztec civilization to a close; the most perplexing and thorny part of my own subject, which has cost me two years' labor. But I have wished to do it as thoroughly as I could, and I work much slower than you do, and, I suspect, much less industriously.

Aztecs.

. . . . . .

From about this time he occasionally wrote letters to my eldest daughter, and sent them to her just as they came from his noctograph, without being copied. Some of them are inserted, to show how pleasantly he accommodated himself to the tastes and humors of one so young.

TO MISS TICKNOR.

Oct. 1, 1840.

MY DEAR ANIKA,[7]

You said you should like to try to make out my writing with my noctograph; so I will give you a specimen of it, and believe, if you can decipher it, you will be qualified to read Egyptian papyri or the monuments of Palmyra. When in Europe, some twenty years since, I met with this apparatus, and have used it ever since, by which my eyes have been spared, and those of others severely taxed. I hope you will never be reduced to so poor a substitute for pen and ink. But if you are, I hope you will find as obliging an amanuensis as you have been to me sometimes.

Noctograph manuscripts.

[7] A name he gave to her in order to distinguish her from her mother, whom he commonly called by her first name, which was also Anna.

CHAP. XIV. 1840. ÆT. 44.

Lord Byron.

His defects.

His merits.

But to change the ſubject, and take up one which we were ſpeculating upon this morning at the breakfaſt table, — Lord Byron. I think one is very apt to talk extravagantly of his poetry ; for it is the poetry of paſſion, and carries away the ſober judgment. It defies criticiſm from its very nature, being lawleſs, independent of all rules, ſometimes of grammar, and even of common ſenſe. When he means to be ſtrong, he is often affected, violent, morbid; if ſtriking, is very obſcure, from dealing more in impreſſions than ideas. And partly from affectation, I ſuppoſe, partly from want of principle, and partly from the *ennui* and diſguſt occaſioned by long ſelf-indulgence and by naturally violent paſſions, he is led into extravagances which outrage the reader, offend the taſte, and lead many perſons of excellent principles and critical diſcernment to condemn him, both on the ground of moral and literary pretenſions. This is true, the more the pity. But then there is, with all this ſmoke and fuſtian, a deep ſenſibility to the ſublime and beautiful in nature, a wonderful melody, or rather harmony, of language, conſiſting, not in an unbroken flow of verſification, like Pope or Campbell, but in a variety, — the variety of nature, — in which ſtartling ruggedneſs is relieved by ſoft and cultivated graces. As he has no narrative hardly in "Childe Harold," he would be very tireſome, if it were not for this very variety of manner, ſo that what is a fault in itſelf produces a beautiful effect taken as a whole. He has great attractions, and, pouring out his ſoul unreſervedly, turns up the depths of feeling which even thoſe who acknowledge the truth of it would ſhrink from expreſſing themſelves. — "There is a meſs for you," as D—— ſays. When you have made this out, burn it, as a lady would ſay. *Addio !*

. . . . .

TO MISS TICKNOR.

Pepperell, Oct. 25, 1840.

MY DEAR ANIKA,

You are ſo clever at hieroglyphics that I ſhall ſend you a little more of them to unravel at your leiſure, and in time you may be qualified to make out a mummy wrapper or an obeliſk inſcription, as well as Champollion or Dr. Young.

We were glad to learn you had reached the Yankee Athens in ſafety. You ſet out in a true wind from "The Horn," [8] — a cornucopia certainly you had of it. You left us all very ſad and melancholic. The traveller on theſe occa-

[8] The name very often given on the ſouthern coaſt of Maſſachuſetts to "Cape Horn," which ſo many of the people of that part of the country double in ſearch of whales. I ſpent two or three ſummers there with my family; and Mr. Preſcott, when he viſited us, uſed to be much amuſed with the familiar manner in which that very remote part of the world was ſpoken of, as if it were ſome ſmall cape in the neighborhood. The letter in the text was written immediately after we had returned to Boſton from a viſit to Pepperell.

ſions finds new ſcenes to divert him. But they who are left behind ſee only the deſerted halls, the vacant place at the board, which was lighted by the bright countenance of a friend. Abſence ſeems to be a negative thing, but there is nothing ſo poſitive, nothing which touches us more ſenſibly than the abſence of the faces we love from the ſeats in which we have been uſed to ſee them. The traveller has always the beſt of the bargain on theſe occaſions, therefore.

Well, we ſhall ſoon be in the gay metropolis with you. We have had many warnings to depart. The leaves have taken *their* leave, one after another. The ſummer weather is quite ſpent, and almoſt the autumnal. The bright colors have faded, the naked trees ſtare around wildly, and, as the cold wind whiſtles through them, the ſhrivelled leaves that ſtill hold out rattle like the bones of a felon hung in chains. The autumn ſeems to be dying, and wants only the cold winding-ſheet of winter to cloſe the ſcene. In fact, ſhe is getting ſome ſhreds of this winding-ſheet before the time, for, while I am writing, the ſnow-flakes are dancing before the window. There 's a meſs of romance for you, all done up in hieroglyphics. When you read Mrs. Radcliffe, or Miſs Porter, or Miſs —— any other mumbler of ſcenery and ſentiment, you 'll find it all there. Your papa talks of Mr. T——'s ſending me his book. Aſk him if he has not mixed up Mr. T—— with Mr. D. T——, very different men, I wot. I am glad he has ſeen General Miller. He is worth a wilderneſs of ——, as Shakeſpeare ſays. Autumn.

Tell your papa and mamma, their maxims of education have not fallen on deaf ears, nor a ſtony heart. But I believe this will be quite enough for once. I muſt begin with ſmall doſes. But it is ſuch a comfort to find any one who can read me without my eternal amanuenſis at my elbows, where, to-day being Sunday, he is not now. Adieu, dear Anika. Do not forget Amory and E.'s love to Lizzy, and mine to your honored parents.

I hope your reſpected father gets on yet without his wig, ear-trumpet, and glaſſes! By the by, my mother loſt her ſpectacles yeſterday. All the town has been ranſacked for them in vain. They were a gold pair. — Do you think your father carried them off?

Once more *addio!*

Your affectionate uncle,[9]

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO DON PASCUAL DE GAYANGOS.

Boſton, Feb. 28, 1841.

. . . . . I have run into a moſt interminable length of proſing, and could not do worſe if I were writing to an abſolute *far niente*, inſtead of one with whom

9 There was no blood relationſhip between us, but the children on both ſides were always accuſtomed to ſpeak of us as "uncles" and "aunts," while all round their elders accepted the deſignation as a pleaſant mark of affection.

CHAP. XIV. 1841. ÆT. 44.

minutes are gold-duſt. You would ſmile if you were to ſee how I am writing with a writing-caſe made for the blind, in which I do not ſee a word of what I write; furniſhing a ſcrawl as illegible as Gonſalvo's [10] for my ſecretary to tranſcribe. Adieu! my dear friend. Pray accept my ſincere congratulations on the happy addition to your family circle. I can ſympathize with you, counting two boys and a girl, the youngeſt of whom is ten years old. I ſhould like to preſent them to you, but ſtill better to take you by the hand myſelf. And, now that ſteam has annihilated time and ſpace, that may come to paſs.

Noctograph.

Marquis Gino Capponi.

I have received a letter from the Marquis Gino Capponi of Florence this morning, informing me that nearly half my work is tranſlated into the language of Dante and Petrarch, and that the remainder would be completed before long under his ſuperviſion. You may know his reputation as a ſcholar, which is high in Italy.[11]

MEMORANDA.

Livy.

Voltaire's "Charles XII."

March 21, 1841. — Am fairly now engaged, though not with thorough induſtry, in beating the buſhes for the narrative [of the Conqueſt of Mexico]. — Laſt week have been conſidering the beſt *modus operandi*, and been looking over ſome celebrated narratives of individual enterpriſes, as Voltaire's "Charles XII." and Livy's Expedition of Hannibal, lib. 22, 23, — the laſt a maſterly ſtory, in which the intereſt, though ſuſpended by neceſſary digreſſion, — more neceſſary in a general hiſtory, — is never broken. The hiſtorian, the greateſt of painters, ſhows his talent in pictures of natural ſcenery, the horrors of the Alps and Apennines, as well as in the delineation of paſſions. Voltaire's volume, ſo popular, is very inferior in literary merit. It bears much reſemblance to the goſſiping memoir-writing of the nation, with little regard to hiſtoric dignity; not much method, or apparently previous digeſtion of his ſubject. It has, however, the great requiſite, in a work meant to be popular, that of *intereſt*. This is maintained by the ſtudious exhibition of Charles's remarkable character, with all its petty infirmities and crazy peculiarities. The eaſy, careleſs arrangement of the narrative gives it a grace very taking. The ſtyle, like Livy's (*magis par*

[10] Nothing can well be more difficult to decipher than the handwriting of the Great Captain. I have one of his autograph letters, but am nearly ignorant of its contents.

[11] A diſtinguiſhed ſcholar, ſtateſman, and man; the head of a family mentioned by Dante, and great before Dante's time, as well as in many generations ſince. The preſent Marquis (1862) is now entirely blind, and was nearly ſo when he firſt intereſted himſelf in the tranſlation of "Ferdinand and Iſabella"; but he has never ceaſed to maintain a high place in the affairs of his country, as well as in the reſpect of his countrymen. He was at one time head of the government of Tuſcany, and, notwithſtanding his blindneſs, was Preſident of the Council of Advice in State Affairs, during the anxious period of the tranſition of power to the Kingdom of Italy. Their common infirmity cauſed a great ſympathy between the Marquis Capponi and Mr. Preſcott.

quam ſimilis), eaſy and natural, gives additional charm. After all, Chambers's "Hiſtory of the Rebellion of 1745" is about as well-written, lively, and agreeable a narrative of an intereſting event, and is managed altogether as ſkilfully, as any that I remember.

Chambers's Rebellion.

Have been looking over Irving's "Columbus" alſo; a beautiful compoſition, but fatiguing, as a whole, to the reader. Why? The fault is partly in the ſubject, partly in the manner of treating it. The diſcovery of a new world — the reſult of calculation and an energy that roſe above diſficulties that would have daunted a common mind — is a magnificent theme in itſelf, full of ſublimity and intereſt. But it terminates with the diſcovery; and unfortunately this is made before half of the firſt volume is diſpoſed of. All after that event is made up of little details, the ſailing from one petty iſland to another, all inhabited by ſavages, and having the ſame general character. Nothing can be more monotonous, and, of courſe, more likely to involve the writer in barren repetition. The chief intereſt that attaches to the reſt of the ſtory is derived from the navigator's own perſonal misfortunes, and theſe are not exciting enough to create a deep or ſtrong ſenſation. Irving ſhould have abridged this part of his ſtory, and, inſtead of four volumes, have brought it into two. Poſterity may do this for him. But it is better for an author to do his own work himſelf.

Irving's Columbus.

The Conqueſt of Mexico, though very inferior in the leading idea which forms its baſis to the ſtory of Columbus, is, on the whole, a far better ſubject, ſince the event is ſufficiently grand, and, as the cataſtrophe is deferred, the intereſt is kept up through the whole. Indeed, the perilous adventures and croſſes with which the enterpriſe is attended, the deſperate chances and reverſes and unexpected viciſſitudes, all ſerve to keep the intereſt alive. On my plan, I go on with Cortés to his death. But I muſt take care not to make this tail-piece too long. A hundred pages will be quite enough.

Conqueſt of Mexico.

TO MISS TICKNOR.

Fitful Head [Nahant], July 25, 1841.

MY DEAR ANIKA,

What a nice quiet time you have had of it for reading or ſleeping, or anything elſe that is rational. Has the ſpirit of improvement beſet you in your ſolitude, and carried you through as much metaphyſics and Spaniſh as it has your reſpected parents? or have you been meandering among romances and poeticals? You have read Irving's "Memoirs of Miſs Davidſon," I believe. Did you ever meet with any novel half ſo touching? It is the moſt painful book I ever liſtened to. I hear it from the children, and we all cry over it together. What a little flower of Paradiſe! Do you remember Malherbe's beautiful lines, — which I happen juſt now not to, —

Irving's Life of Miſs Davidſon.

"Et comme une roſe elle a vecu
L'eſpace d'un matin," —

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and Young's, no leſs beautiful, —

"She ſparkled, was exhaled, and went to heaven"?

Her whole life was one dying day, — one long heart-break. How fitting that her beautiful character ſhould be embalmed in the delicate compoſition of Irving! Read over her farewell to Ruremont, if you forget it. It is really a ſad ſubject.

Viſit to Wood's Hole.

Well, we deſcend on "The Hole" on Tueſday next.[12] William Preſcott 1ſt, 2d, and 3d will make the party. Three perſons and one name, — juſt the oppoſite of my friends the Spaniards, who each have a dozen names at leaſt. On Monday, the 2d of Auguſt, we embark on the great Providence Railroad; reach New Bedford, we hope, that evening; paſs the night in that great commercial emporium of the ſpermaceti; and the next morning by *noon* ſhall embrace the dear "Toads in the Hole." And as we can't get away, and you won't turn us out the while, we ſhall beſiege you till Friday; and, if you are tired of us, you can ſend us to ſee Mr. Swain,[13] or to the ancient city of Nantucket; not a literary emporium, though I believe it ſmells of the lamp pretty ſtrong. I feel quite in the trim of a little vagabondizing, having fairly worked myſelf down. . . . . Indeed, my father and I half arranged a little journey before viſiting you, but I ſhowed the white feather, as uſual. I mean to date health and ſpirits and renovated induſtry from the viſit to "Wood's Hole."

Portrait of Cortés.

Don't you think our traveller, Palenque Stephens, would ſmile at our great preparations in the travelling line? I was in town yeſterday, and ſaw a picture which came from Mexico, a full-length of Cortés, in armor the upper part of his body; his nether extremities in a ſort of ſtockinet, like the old cavaliers of the ſixteenth century, — a very ſtriking and pictureſque coſtume, ſuperior to my Spaniſh painting in execution. But it is too large, and carries an acre of canvas, ſeven feet by four and a half. I called a council of war as to the expediency of cutting his feet off, but Mr. Folſom came in at the moment, and ſaid I never ſhould forgive myſelf; ſo I have concluded to frame him, legs and all. But my wife thinks I ſhall have to ſerve him like the Vicar of Wakefield's great family picture, he is ſo out of all compaſs.

Well, here I am, dear Anika, at the end of my letter. Let us know if our arrangements can be altered for the better, — i. e. if you are to be without company. Love to your father and mother. All of us ſend much love to you and them.

Believe me, moſt truly,

Your affectionate uncle,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

[12] We were then paſſing the ſummer at "Wood's Hole," on the ſouthern ſhore of Maſſachuſetts.

[13] On the adjacent iſland of Nauſhon, where Mr. Swain lived.

MEMORANDA.

March 22, 1842. — My good friends the Ticknors received this laſt week a letter from Miſs Edgeworth, containing a full critique on "Ferdinand and Iſabella," which ſhe had juſt been reading. She condemns my parallel of the Engliſh and Caſtilian queens, and alſo my cloſing chapter; the former as not ſatisfactory and full enough, and rather feeble; the latter as ſuperfluous. I will quote two remarks of another kind: "It is of great conſequence both to the public and private claſs of readers, and he will ſurely have readers of all claſſes, from the cottage and the manufactory to the archbiſhopric and the throne in England, and from Papal juriſdiction to the Ruſſian Czar and the Patriarch of the Greek Church. The work will laſt," &c. If Jupiter grants me half the prediction, I ſhall be pretty well off for readers. The other ſentence is towards the end of the critique: "Otherwiſe an individual ought not to expect that a ſingle voice ſhould be heard amidſt the acclaim of univerſal praiſe with which his work has been greeted in Europe." — This from Miſs Edgeworth.

Ferdinand and Iſabella.

I never worked for the dirty lucre. Am I not right in treaſuring up ſuch golden opinions from ſuch a fource?

TO DON PASCUAL DE GAYANGOS.

Boſton, March 27, 1842.

. . . . . I received from Mr. Everett by this ſteamer copies of a correſpondence of the Tuſcan ambaſſadors at Philip's court, giving ſome very intereſting details of the proceedings, and all in favor of the monarch.[14] I wrote you to ſee Mr. Everett,[15] who will, I am ſure, take pleaſure in communicating with you. I have written to him by this packet, that I have aſked you to call on him, as he was out when you went before. He is much occupied with perplexing affairs, but I have never found him too much ſo for his friends. Should you find any impediment to the examination in the State Office, he will uſe his influence in your favor, I am certain. And I think you had better get a letter from him to Mignet or Guizot. Lord Morpeth, who was here this winter, offered me his ſervices to obtain anything I deſired. But that will be too late for you, as he will not return till ſummer. But if there remains anything to be done then, let me know, and I can get at it through him.

[14] On the death of Don Carlos. He had now, as we have ſeen, been ſome time collecting materials for his Hiſtory of Philip the Second.

[15] Then Miniſter of the United States in London. See *poſt*, for Mr. Preſcott's correſpondence with him.

TO DON PASCUAL DE GAYANGOS.

Boſton, May 30, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have not written by the laſt packets, having nothing particular to ſay. I have received yours of the 2d of April, and am glad you have ſeen Mr. Everett, and are pleaſed with him. I am ſure he will give you any facility in his power for getting acceſs to the French depoſitories. I ſhould ſuppoſe a line from him to Mignet would be ſerviceable.

Value of memoirs.

You have found the Britiſh Muſeum a much richer field than you had firſt anticipated, and the length of your ſtay in London, fortunately for me, will enable you to reap the harveſt. You mention one or two chronicles or memoirs which you have met with there. I have always found a good, goſſiping chronicle or memoir the beſt and moſt fruitful material for the hiſtorian. Official documents, though valuable on other accounts, contain no private relations; nothing, in ſhort, but what was meant for the public eye. Even letters of buſineſs are very apt to be cold and general. But a private correſpondence like Peter Martyr's, or a chronicle like Pulgar's, or Bernal Diaz's, or Bernaldez's, is a jewel of ineſtimable price. There is nothing ſo ſerviceable to the painter of men and manners of a diſtant age. Pray get hold of ſuch, in manuſcript or in print.

Materials for "Philip the Second."

I hope you will get for me whatever printed books fall in your way, uſeful for a hiſtory of that reign. And I ſhall be much obliged by your making out a liſt of all ſuch as may be deſirable for me hereafter to get, as you promiſe to do. I can then pick them up at my leiſure. I find ſome referred to in Ferreras, and others in Nic. Antonio. I am truly glad you are going to Madrid ſoon, or in the courſe of a couple of years. I ſhall be moſt happy to leave the collection then all in your hands, and, while Irving is there, I am ſure you can count on his ſervices, if they can be worth anything to you to get acceſs to any archives which may be under the control of the government. He has aſſured me of his cordial deſire to promote my views and Ticknor's in our reſearches. You will bear in mind, in the copying, to get it done in as legible a hand as poſſible. I don't care for the beauty of it, ſo it is legible. I ſuppoſe in Paris, and I know in Madrid, the expenſe will be greatly lightened.

Robertſon's "Charles the Fifth."

I am very much obliged by your great kindneſs in ſending me your own collection of manuſcripts. They have all reached me ſafely, as I deſired Mr. Rich to inform you. They are a moſt curious and valuable collection to the hiſtorian of the period. But Charles V. has been handled by Robertſon, and I have not the courage nor the vanity to tread where he has gone before. I do not think the hiſtory of his period will make as good a pendant to "Ferdinand and Iſabella" as Philip the Second will. Philip's reign is the firſt ſtep towards the decline, as Iſabella's was the laſt ſtep in the riſe, of the Spaniſh monarchy. I hope to treat this great theme in all its relations, literary, ſocial, and political. It will be a ten years' work. *Da, Jupiter, annos.*

FROM RICHARD FORD, ESQ.

Hevitre, near Exeter, June 5, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,

Permit me to offer you my very beſt thanks for the copy of your laſt edition of "Ferdinand and Iſabella," which you have been ſo kind as to direct Mr. Bentley to ſend to me. I have lived ſo long in Spain, and particularly in the Alhambra, that the work poſſeſſes for me a more than ordinary intereſt, great as is that which it has inſpired in readers of all countries. Indeed, it is a Hiſtory of which America, and, if you will allow me to ſay ſo, England, has every reaſon to be moſt proud, and of which it may be juſtly ſaid, as was ſaid of Gibbon's, that, although the firſt to grapple with a vaſt ſubject, it has left no room for any future attempt.

"Ferdinand and Iſabella."

I hope that, having now fleſhed your pen, you will ſoon reſume it, —*non in reluctantes dracones*. Our mutual friend Paſcual de Gayangos has often ſuggeſted, as an almoſt virgin ſubject, the life of Philip the Second. The poor performance of Watſon is beneath notice. What a new and noble field for you, what an object for a tour to Europe to inſpect the rich archives of England, Paris, and Simancas, where, as I can tell you from perſonal inſpection, the ſtate papers, interlined by Philip himſelf, are moſt various and numerous. . . . . .

Simancas.

FROM P. F. TYTLER, ESQ.

London, 34 Devonſhire Place, June 6, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,

I entreat your kind acceptance of a copy of the ſecond edition of the "Hiſtory of Scotland." A ſingle additional volume — the ninth — will complete the work, bringing it down to the union of the crowns in 1603, and I then purpoſe, if God grant me health, to write an introductory diſſertation on the more ancient hiſtory of Scotland in another volume. In the mean time, although ſtill an unfiniſhed work, I hope you will place it in your library as a teſtimony, ſlight indeed, but moſt ſincere, of the pleaſure and inſtruction your excellent Hiſtory has given me, and, I may add, my family. I feel, too, that in the love of hiſtory, for its own ſake, there is a common and congenial tie, which, although ſo far ſeparated, binds us together, and that one who has, like you, ſo ſucceſsfully overcome the difficulties of hiſtory, will make the readieſt allowance for the errors of a brother.

Hiſtory of Scotland.

I met ſome time ago at Lady Holland's a Spaniſh gentleman,[16] who informed me of your having wiſhed him to examine for you the manuſcripts in

[16] Don Paſcual de Gayangos.

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the State Paper Office about the time of Philip and Mary. When writing, or rather making collections for, my "Letters during the Reigns of Edward the Sixth and Mary," I made a good many transcripts connected with the history of Philip and Mary, which, if they could be of the least service to you, are much at your disposal.

Believe me, dear Sir,

With sincere regard and respect,

Very truly yours,

PATRICK FRASER TYTLER.

CHAPTER XV.

1839–1844.

Materials for the "Conqueſt of Mexico." — Imperfect Induſtry. — Improved State of the Eye. — Begins to write. — Difficulties. — Thoroughneſs. — Interruptions. — Lord Morpeth. — Viſits to New York and Lebanon Springs. — "Conqueſt of Mexico" finiſhed. — Sale of Right to publiſh. — Illneſs of his Father. — Partial Recovery. — "Conqueſt of Mexico" publiſhed. — Its Succeſs. — Reviews of it. — Letters to Mr. Lyell and Don Paſcual de Gayangos. — From Mr. Gallatin. — To Lord Morpeth and to Gayangos. — From Mr. Hallam and Mr. Everett. — Memoranda. — Letter from Lord Morpeth. — Letters to Dean Milman and Mr. J. C. Hamilton. — Letters from Mr. Tytler and Dean Milman.

Materials for the "Conqueſt of Mexico."

FROM the letter to Mr. Irving at the beginning of the laſt chapter, we have ſeen that Mr. Preſcott's earlier apprehenſion about the failure of his application at Madrid for manuſcripts concerning the "Conqueſt of Mexico" was not well founded. He had excellent friends to aſſiſt him, and they had ſucceeded. The chief of them were Don Angel Calderon, Mr. A. H. Everett, then our Miniſter in Spain, and Mr. Middleton, his Secretary of Legation, who had been Mr. Preſcott's claſſmate and college chum, — all of whom were earneſt and helpful, — to ſay nothing of Dr. Lembke, who was in his ſervice for a conſiderable time, collecting manuſcripts, and was both intelligent and efficient. Mr. Preſcott, therefore, no longer feared that he ſhould fail to obtain all he

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could reaſonably expect. But his induſtry, which he thought had needed only this ſtimulus, did not come with the promiſe of abundant materials for its exerciſe. During three months he did very little, and records his regrets more than once in terms not to be miſtaken.

Induſtry.

In May, 1839, however, he was better ſatisfied with himſelf than he had been for at leaſt two years. "I have begun," he ſays, "to lay my bones to the work in good earneſt. The laſt week I have read a variety of authors, — i. e. looked into them, affording illuſtration, in ſome way or other, of the Mexican ſubject. Yeſterday I completed my forty-third birth and my nineteenth wedding day. If they do not prove happy days for me, it is my own fault." And again, a week later: "An induſtrious week for me. My eyes have done me fair ſervice; and when I do not try them by expoſure to light, the hot air of crowded rooms, and the other *et cæteras* of town life, I think I can very generally reckon on them for ſome hours a day. The laſt winter they have not averaged me more than one hour; my fault in a great meaſure, I ſuſpect."

State of his eye.

Except from occaſional expoſures to lights in the evening, I think he ſuffered little at this time, and, as he now put himſelf into rigorous training for work, and avoided everything that could interfere with it, I ſuppoſe it was the period when, for three or four years, he enjoyed more of the bleſſings of ſight than he did during the rest of his life ſubſequent to the original injury. Certainly he uſed with diligence whatever he poſſeſſed of it, and ſometimes ſeemed to revel preſumptuouſly in the privileges its very partial reſtoration afforded him.

Plan of work.

After two or three months of careful preliminary reading on the ſubject of Mexico generally, he formed a plan for the whole work much as he ſubſequently executed it, although, as in the caſe of the "Ferdinand and Iſabella," he for a long time hoped it would not exceed two volumes. The compoſition he began October 14th, 1839. But he had gone only a few pages, when he became diſſatisfied with what he had done, and rewrote them, ſaying, "One would like to make one's

introductory bow in the beſt ſtyle"; and adds, "The ſcenery-painting with which it opens wants the pencil of Irving."

This, however, was only the beginning of his troubles. The firſt part of the work he had undertaken was difficult, and coſt him more labor than all the reſt. It involved neceſſarily the early traditions and hiſtory of Mexico, and whatever related to its peculiar civilization before the Conqueſt and during the period when that extraordinary event was going on. It is true, he ſoon diſcovered that much of what paſſes for curious learning in the manifold diſcuſſions of this obſcure ſubject is only "miſt and moonſhine ſpeculations," and that Humboldt is "the firſt, almoſt the laſt writer on theſe topics, who, by making his theories conform to facts, inſtead of bending his facts to theories, truly merits the name of a philoſopher." Notwithſtanding, however, the ſmall value he found himſelf able to place on moſt of the writers who had examined the Mexican traditions and culture, he read all who might be conſidered authorities upon the ſubject, and even many whoſe works were only in a remote degree connected with it. Thus, he not only went carefully over all that Humboldt had written, and all he could find in the old printed authorities, like Herrera, Torquemada, and Sahagun, together with the vaſt documentary collections of Lord Kingſborough, and the "Antiquités Mexicaines"; but he liſtened to the manuſcript accounts of Ixtlilxochitl, of Camargo, Toribio, and Zuazo. He compared whatever he found in theſe with the oldeſt records of civilization in other countries, — with Herodotus, Champollion, and Wilkinſon for Egypt; with Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville for the Eaſt; and with Gallatin, Du Ponceau, McCulloh, Heckewelder, and Delafield for our own continent. Nothing, in ſhort, ſeemed to eſcape him, and it is curious to ſee in his notes how aptly, and with what grace, he draws contributions from Elphinſtone, Milman, and Lyell, — from Homer, Sophocles, Southey, and Schiller, — and, finally, what happy ſeparate facts he collects from all the travellers who have at any time viſited Mexico, beginning with old Bernal

Obſcurities of his ſubject.

Wide ſtudies.

CHAP. XV. 1840. ÆT. 44.

Diaz, and coming down to the very period when he himſelf wrote, — I mean to that of Bullock, Ward, and Stephens.

Such ſtudies for the deep foundations of the epic ſuperſtructure he contemplated were, of courſe, the work of time, and demanded not a little patience, — more, in fact, of both than he had foreſeen. He had reckoned for his Introduction one hundred pages. It turned out two hundred and fifty. He thought that he could accompliſh it in ſix months. It took nearly a year and a half, not counting the year he gave to preparatory reading on Mexico generally. Three months, indeed, before he put pen to paper, his notes already filled four hundred pages; and ſubſequently, when he ſhowed them to me, as the compoſition was in progreſs, their mass was ſtill greater. I do not know an inſtance of more conſcientious labor; the more worthy of note, becauſe it dealt with ſubjects leſs agreeable to his taſtes and habits than any others to which he ever devoted himſelf.[1]

Conſcientious labor.

For the reſt of his hiſtory he prepared himſelf, not only by reading ſome of the great maſters of hiſtorical narrative, but by noting down in what particulars their example could be uſeful to him. This he found a very pleaſant and encouraging ſort of work, and it enabled him to go on with ſpirit. Not that he failed to find, from time to time, interruptions more or leſs ſerious, which checked his progreſs. One of theſe inter-

[1] After going carefully through with the hieroglyphical writing of the Aztecs, he ſays: "Finiſhed notes on the hieroglyphical part of the chapter, — a hard, barren topic. And now on the aſtronomy, — out of the frying-pan into the fire. I find it, however, not ſo hard to comprehend as I had anticipated. Fortunately, the Aztec proficiency does not require a knowledge of the 'Principia.' Still it was enough to taſk all my mathematics, and patience to boot; it may be the reader's, too."

On this part of his labors, Mr. Gardiner well remarks: "In earlier life he uſed to fancy that his mind was conſtitutionally incapable of comprehending mathematical truths, or at leaſt of following out mathematical demonſtrations beyond the common rules of arithmetic. It was a miſtake. They were only hard for him, and uncongenial; and, at the period referred to, he avoided real intellectual labor as much as he could. But now, though with no previous training, he did overcome all ſuch difficulties, whenever they lay in the way of his hiſtorical inveſtigations, whether on the coins and currency of the time of Ferdinand and Iſabella, or on the aſtronomy of the Aztecs. It is a ſtriking proof of the power his will had acquired over his intellectual taſtes and propenſities."

ruptions occurred almoſt immediately after he had completed his ſevere labor on the Introduction. It was the project for a viſit to England, which tempted him very much, and occupied and diſturbed his thoughts more than it needed to have done. Speaking of his work on his Hiſtory, he ſays: "Now, why ſhould I not go ahead? Becauſe I am thinking of going to England, to paſs four months in the expedition, and my mind is diſtracted with the *pros* and *cons*." And, ten days later, he ſays: "Have decided, at length, — after as much doubt and deliberation as moſt people would take for a voyage round the world, — and decided *not* to go to England." He thought he had given up the project for life. Happily this was not the caſe.

Project of a viſit to England.

Another interruption was cauſed by a threatened abridgment of his "Ferdinand and Iſabella," the untoward effect of which he determined to foreſtall by making an abridgment of it himſelf. This annoyed him not a little. After giving an account of a pleaſant journey, which our two families took together, and which greatly refreſhed him, he goes on: —

Threatened abridgment of "Ferdinand and Iſabella."

"The week ſince my return, lazy and liſtleſs and dreamy. Οἴ μοι. And I muſt now — thermometer at 90° in the ſhade — abandon my Mexican friends and the pleaſant regions of the plateau for — *horreſco referens* — an abridgment of my 'Hiſtory of Ferdinand and Iſabella.' . . . . . Nothing but the dire neceſſity of protecting myſelf from piracy induces me to do this unnatural work, — ſweating down my full-grown offspring to the ſize of a pygmy, — dwarfing my own conception from, I truſt, a manly ſtature, to the compaſs of a nurſery capacity. I never was in love with my own compoſitions. I ſhall hammer over them now, till they give me the *vómito*." [2]

Makes one himſelf.

Diſguſted with his work, — which, after all, he never publiſhed, as the idea of the piratical abridgment was early given up by the bookſelling houſe that threatened it, — he finiſhed it as ſoon as he could. But whether it was the diſagreeableneſs of the taſk or the earneſtneſs of his labors, it was too much

[2] It ſhould be remembered that, when he wrote this paſſage, he had juſt been deſcribing this terrible ſcourge itſelf. (Conqueſt of Mexico, Vol. I. pp. 394, etc.) The ſame diſguſt is expreſſed in one of his letters at the time, in which he ſays that he went through the whole work in twenty-four days.

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for him. He grew feeble and liſtleſs, and came, as already noticed in one of his letters, with his father, to viſit us for a few days on the ſouthern coaſt of Maſſachuſetts at Wood's Hole, where the milder ſea-breezes might, he thought, prove beneficial.

On the 9th of Auguſt he records: —

Overwork.

"I have done nothing except the abridgment, ſince May 26, when I went on a journey to Springfield. My health muſt be my apology the laſt three weeks, and a viſit, from which I returned two days ſince, to my friends at Wood's Hole, — an agreeable viſit, as I anticipated. Nahant has not ſerved me as well as uſual this ſummer. I have been ſorely plagued with dyſpeptic debility and pains. But I am reſolved not to heed them more, and to buckle on my harneſs for my Mexican campaign *in earneſt* again, though with more reſerve and moderation."

Works more eaſily.

This was a little adventurous, but it was ſucceſsful. He worked well during the reſt of Auguſt at Nahant, and when, in the autumn, we viſited him as uſual at Pepperell, where he went early in September, we found him quite reſtored, and enjoying his ſtudies heartily. The laſt days there were days of great activity, and he returned to Boſton, as he almoſt always did, with no little reluctance. Writing at the end of October, he ſays: —

"Leave Pepperell on Wednesday next, November 3. Yeſterday and the afternoon previous, beginning at four P. M., I wrote on my Chapter IV. (Book III.) between eighteen and nineteen pages print, — or twelve pages *per diem*. I ſhall ſoon gallop to the 'Finis' at this pace. But Boſton! The word includes a thouſand obſtacles. Can I not overcome them?"

Lord Morpeth.

One of theſe obſtacles, however, which he encountered as ſoon as he reached town, was a very pleaſant one, and the ſource of much happineſs to him afterwards. He found there Lord Morpeth, now the Earl of Carliſle, who had juſt arrived on a viſit to the United States, and who ſpent ſeveral weeks in Boſton. They ſoon became acquainted, and an attachment ſprang up between them almoſt at once, which was interrupted only by death.

How warm it was on the part of Lord Morpeth will be

plainly ſeen by the following letter, written not long after he left Boſton.

La Habana, March 30, 1842.

MY DEAR PRESCOTT,

You are about the firſt perſon in my life who has made me feel in a hurry to write to him; and I have really forborne hitherto, from thinking it might croſs your mind that you had got rather more of a bargain than you wiſhed when we made our correſponding compact. I am ſure, you have a very faint idea of the pleaſure I derive from the thoughts of the acquaintance which has been ſo ſhort, and the friendſhip which is to be ſo laſting between us; and whenever, as has, however, been very ſeldom the caſe, matters have not gone quite ſo pleaſantly on my journey, and the queſtion, "Was it worth while after all?" would juſt preſent itſelf, "Yes, I have made acquaintance with Preſcott," has been the readieſt and moſt efficacious anſwer. I ſtop, though, leſt you ſhould imagine I have caught the Spaniſh infection of compliments. It is at leaſt appropriate to write to you from Spaniſh ground.

Pleaſure in Preſcott's friendſhip.

I have now been in this iſland about a fortnight, having ſpent moſt of the firſt week in Havana, and returned to it this afternoon from an expedition into the interior. I was entrapped into a dreadfully long paſſage from Charleſton in an American ſailing packet, having been almoſt guaranteed a maximum of ſix days, whereas it took us thirteen. Painfully we threaded the coaſt of Georgia and Florida,

Havana.

"And wild Altama murmured to our woe."

However, we did arrive at laſt, and nothing can be conceived more pictureſque than the entrance into this harbor under the beetling rock of the fortreſs, or ſo peculiar, un-Engliſh, un-American, un-Boſtonian, as the appearance of everything — houſes, ſtreets, perſons, vehicles — that meets your eye. I take it to be very Spaniſh, modified by the black population and the tropical growths. I have been on a ten days' expedition into the interior, and have viſited ſundry ſugar and coffee eſtates. At one of theſe, the Count Fernandina's, I had great ſatisfaction in meeting the Calderons. I immediately felt that you were a link between us, and that I had a right to be intimate with them, which I found it was very well worth while to be on their own account alſo. There is great ſimplicity of character, as well as abundant ſenſe and good feeling, about him, and I think her moſt remarkably agreeable and accompliſhed. I leave you to judge what a reſource and aid they muſt have been to me in a country-houſe, where everybody elſe was talking Spaniſh. We did all think it a pity that you had not gone to viſit them in Mexico; there is ſo much truth in the Horatian rule about "oculis ſubjecta fidelibus," but, my dear and good friend, perhaps you think that is not the epithet exactly to be applied to you. They rave, eſpecially Madame C., of what they ſaw during their equeſtrian exploration in Mexico, the climate and the products of every latitude, the virgin foreſts, of everything but the ſtate of ſociety, which ſeems almoſt hopeleſſly diſorganized and

The Calderons.

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ſtranded. With reſpect to Cuban ſcenery, I think I can beſt condenſe my impreſſion as follows: —

"Ye tropic foreſts of unfading green,
Where the palm tapers and the orange glows,
Where the light bamboo weaves her feathery ſcreen,
And her far ſhade the matchleſs *ceiba* throws!

"Ye cloudleſs ethers of unchanging blue,
Save when the roſy ſtreaks of eve give way
To the clear ſapphire of your midnight hue,
The burniſhed azure of your perfect day!

"Yet tell me not, my native ſkies are bleak,
That, fluſhed with liquid wealth, no cane-fields wave;
For Virtue pines, and Manhood dares not ſpeak,
And Nature's glories brighten round the ſlave."

Shall you be in a hurry to aſk me to write again when you ſee what it brings upon you? I only wiſh you would pay me in kind by ſending me any bit of a more favorite paſſage, a more ſpecial inſpiration, a Piſgah morſel, out of your Hiſtory, as it runs along. By the way, upon the ſubject of my laſt line, and as you know that I do not for the firſt time aſſume the function of ſaying things diſagreeable and impertinent, I do not think that you ſeemed to poſſeſs quite *the ſufficient* repugnance to the ſyſtem of ſlavery. Come here to be duly impreſſed. Will you very kindly remember me to all the members of your family, from the *ex* to the growing Judge. If you ever have a mind to write to me, Sumner will be always able to aſcertain my direction from Mr. Lewis. Give that good friend of ours my bleſſing; I wiſh it were as valuable as a wig. If I could give you a ſtill ſtronger aſſurance of my wiſh to be always pleaſantly remembered by you, it is that, exceſſively as I ſhould like to hear from you at all times, I yet had rather you did not write when not entirely inclined to do ſo. I ſet off for New Orleans next week. You ſee, that I have had the good fortune to loſe my election, which makes me more able to encourage the hope that we may yet meet again on the ſoil of your republic. That would be very pleaſant.

Slavery.

Believe me, ever,

Your affectionate friend,

MORPETH.

There is no alluſion to this new friendſhip among the literary memoranda, except the following, made immediately after Lord Morpeth was gone: —

"December 28th, 1841. Finiſhed text, twenty-three pages of print, and the notes to Chapter VIII. οἴ μοι, οἴ μοι. Not a page a day. So much for

dinners, ſuppers, Lord Morpeth, and nonſenſe. I wiſh I may never have a worſe apology, however, than his Lordſhip, — a beautiful ſpecimen of Britiſh ariſtocracy in mind and manners. But what has it all to do with the 'Conqueſt of Mexico'? If I don't mend, my Spaniards will ſtarve among the mountains. I WILL!"

And this time he kept his reſolution. During the reſt of the winter of 1841–1842, he worked hard and ſucceſsfully, but made few memoranda. Under the 7th of May, however, I find the following: —

Viſits to New York.

"Another long hiatus. Since laſt entry paid two viſits to New York, — a marvellous event in my hiſtory! Firſt, a viſit, about three weeks ſince, I paid to meet Waſhington Irving before his departure for Spain. Spent half a day with him at Wainwright's,[3] — indeed, till twelve at night. Found him delightful and — what, they say, is rare — wide awake. He promiſes to aid me in all my applications. Stayed but two days. Second viſit, April 25, and ſtayed till May 3; went to ſee an oculiſt, Dr. ——, at requeſt of friends, — my own faith not equal to the *minimum* requiſite, — the grain of muſtard-ſeed. I conſumed about a week or more in inquiring about him and his caſes. Returned *re infectâ*. Paſſed a very agreeable week, having experienced the warmeſt welcome from the good people of New York, and ſeen what is moſt worthy of attention in their ſociety. The life I have led there, leaving my eyes uninjured, ſhows that, when I do not draw on them by conſtant literary labors, I can bear a great expoſure to light and company. During my abſence I have been to bed no night till twelve or later, and have dined every day with a dinner party in a blaze of light. Now for the old Aztecs again. . . . . Shall I not work well after my holiday?"

Waſhington Irving.

But he did not. He found it as hard as ever to buckle on his harneſs afreſh, and complained as much as ever of his indolence and liſtleſſneſs. He however wrote a few pages, and then broke off, and we went — I mean both our families went — to Lebanon Springs, of which he made the following record: —

Viſit to Lebanon Springs.

"Next day after to-morrow, June 2, I am going a journey with our friends the Ticknors to Lebanon Springs, and then

'To freſh fields and paſtures new.'"

[3] The Rev. Jonathan M. Wainwright, afterwards Biſhop of the Dioceſe of New York. He had been from an earlier period a friend of Mr. Preſcott, a member of his Club in Boſton, and for ſome time, as Rector of Trinity Church, his clergyman. Biſhop Wainwright died in 1854.

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"June 11. — Returned from my excurſion on the 9th. Now to reſume my hiſtorical labors, and, I truſt, with little interruption. The week has paſſed pleaſantly, amidſt the rich ſcenery of Lebanon, Stockbridge, and Lenox, which laſt we have viſited, making the Springs our *point d'appui*. There are few enjoyments greater than that of wandering amidſt beautiful landſcapes with dear friends of taſte and ſympathies congenial to your own."

Induſtry.

From this time until the "Conqueſt of Mexico" was finiſhed he was very active and induſtrious, ſuffering hardly any interruption, and working with an intereſt which was not leſs the reſult of his devotion to his taſk than of the nature of his ſubject. Sometimes he advanced very rapidly, or at the rate of more than nine printed pages a day; almoſt always doing more and enjoying it more when he was in the country than anywhere elſe.

"Conqueſt of Mexico" completed.

On the 2d of Auguſt, 1843, the whole of the work was completed; three years and about ten months from the time when he began the actual compoſition, and above five years from the time when he began to inveſtigate the ſubject looſely and liſtleſſly. His labor in the laſt months had been too ſevere, and he felt it. But he felt his ſucceſs too. "On the whole," he writes the day he finiſhed it, "the laſt two years have been the moſt induſtrious of my life, I think, — eſpecially the laſt year, — and, as I have won the capital, entitle me to three months of literary loafing."[4]

A few months earlier he had ſold the right of publiſhing

[4] The following are his own dates reſpecting the compoſition of the "Conqueſt of Mexico."

"May, 1838. — Began ſcattered reading on the ſubject, doubtful if I get my documents from Spain. Very liſtleſs and *farniente*-iſh for a year. Over-viſiting and not in ſpirits.

"April, 1839. — Began to read in earneſt, having received MSS. from Madrid.

"Oct. 14, 1839. — Wrote firſt page of Introduction at Pepperell.

"March 1, 1841. — Finiſhed Introduction and Part I. of Appendix.

"Auguſt 2, 1843. — Finiſhed the work. So the Introduction, about half a vol., occupied about as long as the remaining 2½ vols. of daſhing narrative.

"Auguſt, 1841 – Auguſt, 1842. — Compoſed 562 pages of print, text and notes of the narrative.

"Auguſt, 1842 – Auguſt, 1843. — Compoſed 425 pp. print, text and notes; reviſed Ticknor's corrections and his wife's of all the work. Corrected, &c. proofs of nearly all the work. The laſt Book required ſevere reading of MSS."

"The Conqueſt of Mexico" from ſtereotype plates furniſhed by himſelf to the Meſſrs. Harper and Brothers of New York.

Contract for publiſhing.

"They are to have five thouſand copies," he ſays, "paying therefor ſeven thouſand five hundred dollars in caſh (deducting three months' intereſt) at the date of publication. The right is limited to one year, during which they may publiſh as many more copies as they pleaſe on the ſame terms. . . . . I hope they may not be diſappointed, for their ſakes as well as mine. But this is a different contract from that which uſhered 'Ferdinand and Iſabella' into the world."

His arrangements with his publiſhers made it neceſſary for him to deliver them the ſtereotype plates of the completed work by the 15th of October, and thus cauſed a preſſure upon him to which he reſolved that he would never again expoſe himſelf. But he needed not to feel anxious or hurried. His work was all ſtereotyped on the 10th of September.

He went immediately to Pepperell, that he might begin the pleaſant "literary loafing" he had propoſed as his reward. "I promiſe myſelf," he ſays, "a merry autumn with lounging at my eaſe among friends and idle books; a delicious contraſt after the hard ſummer's work I have done." A part of this we ſpent with him, and found it as gay as he had anticipated. But, as he approached its end, a ſad diſappointment awaited him. On the 28th of October, his father ſuffered a ſlight ſhock of paralyſis, and the next day he wrote to me as follows.

Pepperell.

Illneſs of his father.

Pepperell, Sunday evening.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I ſuppoſe you may have heard through William of our affliction in the illneſs of my father. As you may get incorrect impreſſions of his condition, I will briefly ſtate it.

His left cheek was ſlightly, though very viſibly, affected by the paralyſis, — his articulation was ſo confuſed that he was ſcarcely intelligible, — and his mind was ſadly bewildered. He was attacked in this way yeſterday about half paſt nine A. M. In a few hours his face was reſtored to its uſual appearance. His articulation was gradually improved, and to-day is nearly perfect; and his mind has much brightened, ſo that you would not detect any failing unleſs your attention were called to it. I have no doubt the preſent attack will paſs away in time without leaving permanent conſequences. But for the future, I ſhould

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tremble to lift the veil. There is an oppreſſive gloom over the landſcape, ſuch as it never wore to my eyes before.

God bleſs you and yours.

Moſt affectionately,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

GEORGE TICKNOR, ESQ.

Later, he records his feelings in the ſame tone.

A cloud is thrown over our happy way of life by the illneſs of my dear father, who three days ſince was attacked by a ſtroke of paralyſis, which affected his ſpeech materially, and for the firſt time threw a darkneſs over that fine intellect. The effects of the ſhock have, thank Heaven, much paſſed away; and we may hope that it is not intended that ſo much wiſdom and goodneſs ſhall be taken away from us yet. Still it has filled me with a ſadneſs ſuch as but one other event of my life ever cauſed; for he has been always a part of myſelf; to whom I have confided every matter of any moment; on whoſe ſuperior judgment I have relied in all affairs of the leaſt conſequence; and on whoſe breaſt I have been ſure to find ready ſympathy in every joy and ſorrow. I have never read any book of merit without diſcuſſing it with him, and his noble example has been a light to my ſteps in all the chances and perplexities of life. When that light is withdrawn, life will wear a new and a dark aſpect to me.

Sympathy of father and ſon.

As he fondly anticipated, his father's health was ſoon in a great meaſure reſtored, and he enjoyed life much as he had done for ſome years previous to this attack. Meantime the inevitable preſs went on, and the "Conqueſt of Mexico" was publiſhed on the 6th of December, 1843.

Reſtoration in part of his father's health.

"Conqueſt of Mexico" publiſhed.

"It is," he ſays, "ſix years next Chriſtmas, ſince 'Ferdinand and Iſabella' made their bow to the public. This ſecond apparition of mine is by no means ſo ſtirring to my feelings. I don't know but the critic's ſtings, if pretty well poiſoned, may not raiſe a little irritation. But I am ſure I am quite proof againſt the anodyne of praiſe. Not that I expect much either. But criticiſm has got to be an old ſtory. It is impoſſible for one who has done that ſort of work himſelf to feel any reſpect for it. How can a critic look his brother in the face without laughing? As it is not in the power of the critics to write a poor author up into permanent eſtimation, ſo none but an author who has once been kindly received can write himſelf down. Yet I ſhall be ſorry if the work does not receive the approbation of my friends here and abroad — *and of the few.*"[5]

His feelings on the publication.

[5] It ſeems ſingular now that he ſhould have had any anxiety about the ſucceſs of the "Conqueſt of Mexico." But he had. Above a year earlier, he recorded his doubts: "The Ticknors, who have read my manuſcript relating to the Conqueſt,

But there was no need of this misgiving, or of any misgiving whatever. The work was greeted from one end of the United States to the other with a chorus of applause, such as was never vouchsafed to any other, of equal gravity and importance, that had been printed or reprinted among us. Within a month after it appeared, more than a hundred and thirty newspapers from different parts of the country had been sent to the author, all in one tone. Within the same period, many of the booksellers' shops were exhausted of their supplies several times, so as to be unable to meet the current demand. And finally, for a fortnight after the fourth thousand was sold, the whole market of the country was left bare. The five thousand copies, provided for by the contract, which he thought could hardly be sold within a year, disappeared, in fact, in about four months. The sale of the work was, therefore, as remarkable as the applause with which it had been received on its appearance. The author ceased to be anxious, and the publishers were jubilant.[6]

Its great success.

An English edition was at the same time published by Mr. Bentley in London; the copyright, after considerable negotiation, having been sold to him on the author's behalf by his kind and excellent friend, Colonel Aspinwall, for six hundred and fifty pounds. A second edition was called for in the May following, and Baudry published one at Paris in the original soon afterwards. It had at once a great run in England and on the Continent.

English edition.

Of course, the reviews of all kinds and sizes were prompt in their notices. At home the authors of such criticisms ran no risk. They were to deal with a writer whose character was fully settled, in his own country at least. There was, therefore, no difference of opinion among them, no qualification,

assure me that the work will succeed. Would they were my enemies that say so! But they are friends to the backbone." He had the same misgivings, I know, until the work had been published two or three weeks.

[6] This was the genuine fruit of a well-earned fame, as the earliest sales in Boston of the "Ferdinand and Isabella" were the honorable fruit of great social and personal regard. See *ante*, pp. 106, 107.

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American reviews.

no reſerve; certainly none that I remember, and none of any moment. A beautiful article, written with great judgment and kindneſs, by Mr. George S. Hillard, appeared in the "North American Review" for January, 1844, and was followed by two of no leſs power and finiſh in the "Chriſtian Examiner" by Mr. George T. Curtis, and in the "Methodiſt Quarterly" by Mr. Joſeph G. Cogſwell. Theſe all came from the hands of perſonal friends. But friendſhip was not needed to help the ſucceſs of a book which, while it was ſettled on an aſſured foundation of facts carefully aſcertained, yet read, in the narrative portions, like a romance, and was written in a ſtyle often not leſs glowing than that of Scott, and ſometimes reminding us of what is fineſt in "Ivanhoe," or "The Taliſman."

Engliſh reviews.

The ſame verdict, therefore, ſoon arrived from England, where the book was neceſſarily judged without reference to its author. The articles in the "Athenæum" were, I think, the earlieſt; one of no ſmall ability, which appeared rather late, by Charles Philips, Eſq., in the "Edinburgh," was, on the whole, the moſt laudatory. But they were all in the ſame ſpirit. A long and elaborate criticiſm, however, in the "Quarterly," written by the Rev. Mr. Milman, now (1862) the Dean of St. Paul's, was the moſt carefully conſidered and thorough of any. It gratified Mr. Preſcott very much by its ſtrong, manly ſenſe and graceful ſcholarſhip, but ſtill more by the eſtimate which a perſon of ſuch known elevation of character placed upon the moral tendencies of the whole work. It became at once the foundation of an acquaintance which ripened afterwards into a ſincere perſonal friendſhip.

His thoughts about them.

But Mr. Preſcott did not ſuffer theſe things to have more than their due weight with him, or to occupy much of his time or thought. After giving a ſlight notice of them, he ſays: "It is ſomewhat enervating, and has rather an unwholeſome effect, to *podder* long over theſe perſonalities. The beſt courſe is action, — things, not ſelf, — at all events not ſelf-congratulation. So now I propoſe to diſmiſs all further thoughts of my literary ſucceſs."

TO CHARLES LYELL, ESQ.[7]

Nahant, July 11, 1842.

MY DEAR MR. LYELL,

I understand from Mrs. Ticknor that you are to be in town this week, previous to sailing. I trust we shall have the pleasure of shaking hands with you and Mrs. Lyell again before you shake the dust of our republican soil off your feet. Perhaps your geological explorations may lead you among our cliffs again. If so, will you and Mrs. L. oblige us by dining and making our house your head-quarters for the day? I regret, my father and mother are absent in the country this week. But I need not say, that it will give my wife and myself sincere pleasure to see you both, though we had rather it should be in the way of "how d'ye do," than "good-by." Pray remember me most kindly to Mrs. Lyell, and believe me

Very faithfully yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO DON PASCUAL DE GAYANGOS.

Boston, Jan. 30, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

From yours of December 25th, I find you are still in London. I hope you received mine of November 14th, informing you of Mr. Tytler's kind offer to place his extracts from the State Paper Office at my disposal, and that you also received my note of December 1st. When you have examined the papers in Brussels and Paris you will be able to form an estimate of what the copying them will cost. I think that the first twenty letters in Raumer's "History of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" show that there are very important materials in the Bibliothèque Royale in Paris; and I should think it would be well to get copies of the very documents of which he gives some slight abstracts. They seem, several of them, to relate to the private life of Philip and his family, and interesting details of the court in his reign, and the latter part of that of Charles the Fifth.

Mr. Tytler.

Materials for a history of Philip II.

The Venetian *Relazioni* are, I suppose, some of them quite important, considering the minuteness with which the ministers of that republic entered into the affairs of the courts where they resided. Mr. Everett speaks of Mansard's account of these *Relations* as affording all the information one could desire to guide one. If Mr. E. is right, the Archives du Royaume, in the Hôtel

[7] This letter is inserted here, as the first in a very interesting correspondence, of which large portions will hereafter be given, and which was terminated only by Mr. Prescott's death. Mr. Lyell — now Sir Charles Lyell — was in July, 1842, just finishing his first visit to the United States, of which he afterwards published an account in 1845, — one of the most acute and just views of the character and condition of the people of the United States that has ever been printed.

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Private letters and diaries wanted.

Soubiſe, muſt alſo contain much of intereſt relating to our ſubject. But to ſay truth, valuable as are official documents, ſuch as treaties, inſtructions to miniſters, &c., I ſet ſtill greater ſtore by thoſe letters, diaries, domeſtic correſpondence, which lay open the characters and habits of the great actors in the drama. The others furniſh the cold outlines, but theſe give us the warm coloring of hiſtory, — all that gives it its charm and intereſt. Such letters as Peter Martyr's, ſuch notices as the Quincuagenas of Oviedo, and ſuch goſſiping chronicles as Bernal Diaz's, are worth an ocean of ſtate papers for the hiſtorian of life and manners, who would paint the civilization of a period. Do you not think ſo?

TO DON PASCUAL DE GAYANGOS.

Boſton, Jan. 30, 1843.

Spaniſh tranſlation.

. . . . . You will alſo probably ſee Señor Benavides, my tranſlator.[8] I am greatly obliged by the account which you have given me of him and the other tranſlators, who, I ſuppoſe, will now abandon the ground. You ſay Señor B. will controvert ſome of my opinions. So much the better, if he does it in a courteous ſpirit, as I have no doubt he will; for if he did not approve of the work on the whole, he would, I ſhould ſuppoſe, hardly take the trouble to tranſlate it. If he preſents views differing on ſome points from mine, the reader will have more lights for getting at truth, which ought to be the end of hiſtory. Very likely I have pleaſed my imagination with a *beau ideal;* for you know I am born a republican, but not a fierce one, and in my own country, indeed, am ranked among what in England would correſpond with the conſervatives.

I hope his work will be got up in creditable ſtyle, as regards typographical execution, as well as in more important matters. I ſhould like to make a good impreſſion on my adopted countrymen, and a good dreſs would help that. From what you ſay of Señor Benavides I augur favorably for the work. I hope he will ſee the laſt London edition, full of errors as it is in the Caſtilian. You will be good enough to ſend me ſome copies when it is publiſhed.

FROM MR. GALLATIN.

New York, June 22, 1843.

DEAR SIR,

Veytia's Mexico.

I feel much obliged to you for the copy of Veytia's "Hiſtoria Antigua de Mexico," ſent me by Mr. Catherwood. Unfortunately I have ſo far forgotten Spaniſh, as everything elſe which I learnt late in life, that to read it has become a labor; and Veytia is not very amuſing or inviting. Still his work deſerves attention. The authorities he quotes are preciſely thoſe of Clavigero, and the

[8] Of the "Ferdinand and Iſabella."

two books were written independent of each other. I have only run through Veytia, and I intend (if I can) to read it more carefully. But the result in my mind, so far as I have compared, is that, beyond the one hundred years which preceded the Spanish conquest, the Mexican history is but little better than tradition; at least beyond the limits of the valley of Mexico. Our best historical authorities are, as it seems to me, those which the Spaniards found and saw on their arrival, and the still existing monuments. But I should not indulge in such crude conjectures, and wait with impatience for your work, the publication of which please to hasten that I may have a chance to read it. Please to accept the assurance of my high regard and distinguished consideration, and to believe me,

The safest authorities.

Dear Sir,

Your obedient and faithful servant,

ALBERT GALLATIN.

TO DON PASCUAL DE GAYANGOS.

Boston, Nov. 30, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am glad to find by your letter of October 10, that you are so comfortably established in Madrid, and most happy that you are placed in the Arabic chair for which you are so well qualified.[9] It is much preferable to an African mission on every account, and I hope, whatever party comes uppermost in your land of *trastornos*, you will not be disturbed in it.[10] I am not very much surprised at the impediments you met with in the public libraries from their confused state, and from the apathy of those who have the care of them. How can the regard for letters flourish amidst such cruel civil dissensions? But *meliora speremus*. In the mean time I do not doubt that your habitual perseverance and the influence of your position will give you access to what is of most importance. You say nothing of the Escorial, in speaking of the great collections. Is not that a repository of much valuable historic matter? And is it not in tolerable order? I believe it used to be.

It will be very hard if the Spaniards refuse me admittance into their archives, when I am turning my information, as far as in my power, to exhibit their national prowess and achievements. I see I am already criticised by an English periodical for vindicating in too unqualified a manner the deeds of the old Conquerors. If you were in England, I should be sure of one champion, at least, to raise a voice in my favor! But I hope it will not be needed.

Materials for history of Philip II.

You are most fortunate in having access to such private collections as those of Alva, Santa Cruz, Infantado, &c. The correspondence of the admiral of the Armada, and that also of Requesens, must have interest. It was the archives of

9 In the University of Madrid.

10 Don Pascual had some thought of going, in an official capacity, to Tunis, &c., so as to collect Arabic manuscripts. In fact, he did go later; but not at this time, and not, I think, burdened with official cares.

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the Santa Cruz family of which Señor Navarrete ſpoke as containing materials relating to Philip the Second. Pray thank that kind-hearted and venerable ſcholar for his many courteſies to me. You will of courſe add to our collection whatever he and his brother Academicians publiſh in reference to this reign.

FROM MR. ROGERS.

MY DEAR SIR,

At Paris, where I was idling away one of the autumn months, I received your welcome letter; and I need not ſay with what pleaſure I diſcovered your volumes on my table when I returned to London. Let me congratulate you on an achievement at once ſo bloodleſs and ſo honorable to your country and yourſelf.

"It ſeems to me," ſays Mr. Hume to Mr. Gibbon, "that your countrymen, for almoſt a whole generation, have given themſelves up to barbarous and abſurd faction, and have totally neglected all polite letters. I no longer expected any valuable production ever to come from them."

Superficial ſcholarſhip.

May it not in ſome meaſure be ſaid even now of England and France, and I fear alſo of America, — the many who would except themſelves there being for the moſt part a multitude of faſt writers and faſt readers, who deſcend from one abyſs to another?

That you may long continue in health and ſtrength, to ſet a better example, is the ardent but diſintereſted wiſh of one who cannot live to avail himſelf of it.

Sincerely yours,

S. ROGERS.

London, Nov. 30, 1843.

FROM MR. HALLAM.

Wilton Creſcent, London, Dec. 29, 1843.

MY DEAR SIR,

I received, not long after your letter reached my hands, a copy of your "Hiſtory of the Conqueſt of Mexico," which you had ſo kindly led me to expect; and ſhould have ſooner acknowledged it, if my abſence from London ſoon afterwards had not retarded my peruſal of it, and if I had not been forced to wait ſome weeks for an opportunity of ſending my anſwer through our friend Mr. Everett.

"Conqueſt of Mexico."

I ſincerely congratulate you on this ſecond ſucceſs in our hiſtoric field. If the ſubject is not, to us at leaſt of the Old World, quite equal in intereſt to the "Hiſtory of Ferdinand and Iſabella," you have perhaps been able to throw ſtill more freſh light on the great events which you relate, from ſources hardly acceſſible, and at leaſt very little familiar to us. It has left Robertſon's narrative, the only popular hiſtory we had, very far behind. But I confeſs that the hiſtory

of your hero has attracted me less than those chapters relating to Mexican Antiquities, which at once excite our astonishment and curiosity. Mr. Stephens's work had already turned our minds to speculate on the remarkable phenomenon of a civilized nation decaying without, as far as we can judge, any subjugation, (or, of one by a more barbarous people, this, though not unprecedented, is still remarkable,) and without leaving any record of its existence. Some facts, if such they are, mentioned by you, are rather startling, especially those of religious analogy to Jewish and Christian doctrines; but they do not all seem to rest on certain evidence. If true, we must perhaps explain them by help of the Norwegian settlement.

Stephens on Central America.

Your style appears to me almost perfect, and better, I think, than in your former history. You are wholly free from what we call Americanisms. Sometimes I should think a phrase too colloquial, especially in the notes.

Style of Mr. Prescott.

I beg you to give my best regards to Mr. and Mrs. Ticknor, when you next see them, and I remain, my dear sir,

Very faithfully yours,

HENRY HALLAM.

FROM MR. EVERETT.

London, Jan. 2, 1844.

MY DEAR SIR,

. . . . . We have been reading the "Conquest of Mexico" about our fireside, and finish the second volume this evening. I enjoy it more than its predecessor. The interest is of a more epic kind; and reading it aloud is more favorable to attention and effect. I think its success complete. I hear different opinions as to its merit compared with "Ferdinand and Isabella." Old Mr. Thomas Grenville (the son of George, of Stamp Act fame, and the collector, I think, of the best private library of its size I know) gives the preference to "Ferdinand and Isabella." Mr. Hallam inclines, I think, to prefer "The Conquest." He said he thought the style was rather easier in the latter; but Mr. Grenville made precisely the same criticism as to "Ferdinand and Isabella," which he told me he thought the ablest modern history in the English language. This extraordinary and venerable person was eighty-eight years old on the 31st of December. On that day he walked from his house near Hyde Park Corner to Stafford House, and called on me on his way home; not seeming more fatigued than I should have been with the same circuit. I once asked him if he recollected his uncle, Lord Chatham, and he answered that he recollected playing ninepins with him at the age of fourteen.

"Conquest of Mexico."

Mr. Thomas Grenville.

I enclose you a letter from Mr. Hallam. The article on your book in the "Quarterly," as I learn from Dr. Holland, was written by Mr. Milman. Mr. Grenville spoke with great severity of the article on "Ferdinand and Isabella" which appeared in the same journal.

MEMORANDA.

Succeſs of the "Conqueſt of Mexico."

January 7, 1844. — The firſt entry in the New Year. It begins auſpiciouſly for this ſecond child of my brain, as 1838 did for its elder brother. More than a hundred and thirty papers from different parts of the country,[11] and a large number of kind notes from friends, atteſt the rapid circulation of the work, and the very favorable regard it receives from the public. The principal bookſtores here have been exhauſted of their copies two or three times, though there has always been a ſupply at the inferior depots. The Harpers have not been able to ſend the books nearly as faſt as ordered. I ſuppoſe the delay is explained by the time occupied in binding them.

Important opinions concerning it.

From the prevalent (with ſcarcely an exception) tone of criticiſm, I think three things may be eſtabliſhed in regard to this Hiſtory, of which I had previouſly great doubts. 1. The Introduction and chapter in Appendix I. are well regarded by the public, and I did not ſpend my time injudiciouſly on them. 2. The laſt book, on the biography of Cortés, is conſidered a neceſſary and intereſting appendage. 3. The ſtyle of the whole work is conſidered richer, freer, more animated and graceful than that of "Ferdinand and Iſabella." This laſt is a very important fact, for I wrote with much leſs faſtidiouſneſs and elaboration. Yet I rarely wrote without revolving the chapter many times in my mind before writing. But I did not podder over particular phraſes.

. . . . . Had I accepted half of my good friend Folſom's criticiſms, what would have become of the ſtyle? Yet they had and will always have their value for accurate analyſis of language and thought, and for accuracy of general facts. My Poſtſcripts, written with leaſt labor, have been much commended as to ſtyle.

FROM LORD MORPETH.

Caſtle Howard, Jan. 23, 1844.

MY DEAR PRESCOTT,

"Conqueſt of Mexico."

You will have thought me over-long in anſwering your moſt gracious and precious gift of your "Mexico," but I ſent you a meſſage that you were not to have a word from me about it till I had quite finiſhed it, and, as I read it out loud to my mother and ſiſter, this has not taken place ſo ſoon as you might have expected. And now my poor verdict will come after you are ſaturated with the public applauſe, and will care mighty little for individual ſuffrage. Still I will hope that, however careleſs you may be of the approbation, you will not be wholly indifferent to the pleaſure with which our occupation has been attended. Nothing could be more ſatisfactory than to roll along through your eaſy, animated, and pictured periods, and your candid and diſcriminating, but unaſſuming, diſ-

[11] Theſe were ſent to him in a flood, chiefly by mail and by his publiſhers.

quiſitions, and to have my own intereſt and approval ſhared by thoſe to whom I read; and then further to find the wide circle without corroborate our verdict,

"And nations hail thee with a love like mine."

. . . . . .

We are getting through the mildeſt winter almoſt ever remembered. Before you receive this, I probably ſhall be a member of the Houſe of Commons, a re-entry upon public turmoil of which I do not at all reliſh the proſpect. Are you beginning Pizarro? How you muſt have pleaſed Rogers by your mention of him. Pray give my kindeſt regards to your family.

Believe me, ever affectionately yours,

MORPETH.

TO THE REV. H. H. MILMAN.

Boſton, Jan. 30, 1844.

MY DEAR SIR,

If you will allow one to addreſs you ſo familiarly who has not the honor to be perſonally known to you; and yet the frequency with which I have heard your name mentioned by ſome of our common friends, and my long familiarity with your writings, make me feel as if you were not a ſtranger to me. I have learnt from my friend Mr. Everett that you are the author of a paper in the laſt London "Quarterly" on the "Conqueſt of Mexico." It is unneceſſary to ſay with what ſatisfaction I have read your elegant and encomiaſtic criticiſm, written throughout in that courteous and gentlemanlike tone, particularly grateful as coming from a Tranſatlantic critic, who has no national partialities to warp his judgment. Speaking the ſame language, nouriſhed by the ſame literature, and with the ſame blood in our veins, I aſſure you the American ſcholar, next to his own country, looks for ſympathy and countenance to his fatherland more than to any other country in the world. And when he receives the expreſſion of it from thoſe whom he has been accuſtomed to reverence, he has obtained one of his higheſt rewards.

Review of the "Conqueſt of Mexico."

May I aſk you to remember me kindly to Mr. and Mrs. Lyell and to Mr. Hallam, and believe me, my dear ſir,

With great reſpect,

Your obliged and obedient ſervant,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO JOHN C. HAMILTON, ESQ., NEW YORK.

Boſton, Feb. 10, 1844.

MY DEAR MR. HAMILTON,

I have read the notice of my work in the laſt "Democratic Review," and as you intereſted yourſelf to get it written, you may perhaps be pleaſed to know my opinion about it. I like it very much. It is written throughout in a very courteous and gentlemanlike ſpirit. As far as I am perſonally concerned, I ſhould be very unreaſonable were I not gratified by the liberal commendation of my literary labors.

Standard of hiſtoric judgment.

The great queſtion of the proper ſtandard of hiſtoric judgment is one in which of courſe I muſt be at iſſue with the writer, — or rather one in which he chooſes to be at iſſue with me. In managing the argument, he ſhows much acuteneſs and plauſibility. Yet if we accept his views of it, ſome of the faireſt names in the dark period of the Middle Ages, and of antiquity, will wear a very ugly aſpect. The immorality of the act and of the actor ſeem to me two very different things; and while we judge the one by the immutable principles of right and wrong, we muſt try the other by the fluctuating ſtandard of the age. The real queſtion is, whether a man was ſincere, and acted according to the lights of his age. We cannot fairly demand of a man to be in advance of his generation, and where a generation goes wrong, we may be ſure that it is an error of the head, not of the heart. For a whole community, including its beſt and wiſeſt, will not deliberately ſanction the habitual perpetration of crime. This would be an anomaly in the hiſtory of man. The article in the laſt London "Quarterly," from the pen of Milman, a clergyman of the Church of England, you know, expreſſly approves of my moral eſtimate of Cortés. This is from a great organ of Orthodoxy. One might think the "Democratic" and the "Quarterly" had changed ſides. Rather funny, *n'eſt ce pas?*

Bernal Diaz.

As to the queſtion of fact, — what Cortés did, or did not do, — the "Reviewer" has leaned excluſively on one authority, that of the chronicler Diaz, an honeſt man, but paſſionate, credulous, querulous, and writing the reminiſcences of fifty years back. Truth cannot be drawn from one ſource, but from complicated and often contradictory ſources.

I think you will hardly agree that the Conqueror deſerved cenſure for not throwing off his allegiance to the Emperor, and ſetting up for himſelf. However little we can comprehend the full feeling of loyalty, I think we can underſtand the baſeneſs of treaſon. But I will not trouble you with an argument on this topic. I muſt ſay, however, that I reſpect the "Democratic," and am ſure the "North American" contains few articles written with more ability than this, much as I differ from ſome of the poſitions taken in it.

I have run, I find, into an unconſcionable length of line, which I hope you will excuſe. Pray remember me kindly to your wife and daughter, and believe me,

Very ſincerely, your friend,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

FROM PATRICK FRASER TYTLER, ESQ.

34 Devonſhire Place, April, 1844.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your precious preſent of the "Hiſtory of Mexico," and the kind letter which accompanied it, found me entangled with my ninth and laſt volume of the "Hiſtory of Scotland," and the winding up my imperfect labors. This muſt be my apology for a delay which has weighed heavily on my conſcience, but I could not bear the idea of dipping into, or giving a haſty peruſal to anything proceeding from your pen, and Cortés was deferred till Elizabeth and King Jamie were at reſt. And now, my dear ſir, let me thank you moſt ſincerely for the delight and the inſtruction which I have received. "Ferdinand and Iſabella" had prepared me to expect much; but in the "Conqueſt of Mexico" you have outſtript yourſelf, and produced a work which can inſtruct the wiſeſt, and charm and intereſt the youngeſt reader; which combines a pathetic and ſtirring narrative with ſome of the graveſt leſſons that can be derived from hiſtory. How you ſhould have achieved ſuch a work, under the continued privation to which you allude ſo ſimply and beautifully in your Preface, is to me, I own, little leſs than miraculous; for, compoſed under every advantage of individual conſultation and reſearch, "Mexico" would be a noble monument of labor and genius. Long, very long may you live to conquer ſuch difficulties as would overwhelm any inferior mind.

"Conqueſt of Mexico."

Difficulty from imperfect ſight.

Believe me, my dear Mr. Preſcott, with ſincere regard and reſpect, moſt truly yours,

PATRICK FRASER TYTLER.

P. S. I have ſent along with this the ninth and laſt volume of my "Hiſtory of Scotland," with ſome manuſcripts, letters, and extracts, relating to the times of Philip and Mary, which I copied from the originals in the State Paper Office. Theſe are entirely at your ſervice, if they can be of the leaſt aſſiſtance in the reſearches into this period which I underſtood you at one time contemplated.

FROM THE REV. H. H. MILMAN.

Cloiſters, Weſtminſter Abbey, April 12, 1844.

MY DEAR SIR,

I reproach myſelf for having delayed ſo long to acknowledge the note in which you expreſſed your gratification at the notice of your Mexican work in the "Quarterly Review." I aſſure you that nothing could give me greater pleaſure than finding an opportunity of thus publicly, though anonymouſly, declaring my high opinion of your writings. Our many common friends have taught me to feel as much reſpect for your private character as your writings have commanded as an author. I was much amuſed, after I had commenced the article, with receiving a letter from our friend Lord Morpeth, expreſſing an anxious hope that juſtice would be done to the work in the "Quarterly Review." Without betraying my ſecret, I was able to ſet his mind at reſt.

"Quarterly Review."

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Invitation to England.

Can we not perſuade you to extend your perſonal acquaintance with our men of letters, and others whoſe ſociety you would appreciate, by a viſit to England? Perhaps you might not find much to aſſiſt you in your reſearches (if report ſpeaks true, that you are engaged on the Conqueſt of Peru), which you cannot command in America, yet even in that reſpect our libraries might be of ſervice. But of this I am ſure, that no one would be received with greater cordiality or more univerſal eſteem.

If this be impoſſible or impracticable, allow me to aſſure you that I ſhall be delighted if this opening of our correſpondence ſhould lead to further acquaintance, even by letter. I ſhall always feel the greateſt intereſt in the labors of one who does ſo much honor to our common literature. In letters we muſt be brethren, and God grant that we may be in political relations, and in reciprocal feelings of reſpect and regard.

Believe me, my dear ſir, ever faithfully yours,

H. H. MILMAN.

CHAPTER XVI.

1844.

Mr. Preſcott's Style. — Determines to have one of his own. — How he obtained it. — Diſcuſſions in Reviews about it. — Mr. Ford. — Writes more and more freely. — Naturalneſs. — His Style made attractive by Cauſes connected with his Infirmity of Sight. — Its final Character.

Style of writing.

IT has, I believe, been generally thought that Mr. Preſcott's ſtyle reached its happieſt development in his "Conqueſt of Mexico." No doubt, a more exact finiſh prevails in many parts of the "Ferdinand and Iſabella," and a high authority has ſaid that there are portions of "Philip the Second" written with a vigor as great as its author has anywhere ſhown.[1] But the freſhneſs and freedom of his deſcriptions in the "Mexico," eſpecially the deſcriptions of ſcenery, battles, and marches,

[1] Letter from Dean Milman.

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are, I think, not found to the same degree in either of his other histories, and have rendered the style of that work singularly attractive. Certainly, it is a style well fitted to its romantic subject, although it may be one which it would have been adventurous or unwise to apply, in the same degree, to subjects from their nature more grave and philosophical.

Early studies for style.

But whatever Mr. Prescott's style may at any period have been, or in whichever of his works its development may have been most successful, it was unquestionably the result of much consideration and labor, and of very peculiar modes of composition. With what self-distrust he went back, when he was already above twenty-five years old, and toiled through Murray's English Grammar, and Blair's Rhetoric, as if he were a schoolboy, and how he followed up these humble studies with a regular investigation of what was characteristic in all the great English prose-writers, from Roger Ascham down to our own times, we have already seen. It was a deep and solid foundation, laid with a distinct purpose, that cannot be mistaken, and one which, in years subsequent, well repaid the weary hours it cost him. I remember how conscientious and disagreeable these labors were, for he sometimes grew impatient and complained of them. But he persevered, as he always did in what he deliberately undertook.

He determined, however, at the same time, that, whatever his style might be, it should be his own.

His style not an imitated one.

"Every one," he said at the outset of his severer studies, "pours out his thoughts best in a style suited to his own peculiar habits of thinking.

"The best method for a man of sense to pursue is to examine his own composition, after a sufficiently long period shall have elapsed for him to have forgotten it. He will then be in a situation to pronounce upon his own works as upon another's.[2] He may consult one or two good friends in private. Their opinions will be valuable, inasmuch as they will in all probability be more honest and sincere than a printed criticism, and, moreover, they will not exert the same depressing influence on the spirits that a reverence for public criticism

[2] "In order to correct my own history advantageously," he said, nine years later, when he was just beginning to write his "Ferdinand and Isabella," "I must never revise what I have written until after an interval of as many years as possible."

is apt to beget. I am inclined to believe that it would be for a man's intereſt as an author never to conſult a printed criticiſm on his own publications."[3]

Theſe were wiſe and wary concluſions to have been reached ſo early in his literary life, and they were ſubſtantially adhered to through the whole of it. He did not, however, refrain from reading the criticiſms that appeared on his larger works, becauſe they were unfavorable. None, it is true, were really ſuch. But whether he read them or not, he judged and corrected whatever he wrote with the aſſiſtance of at leaſt one friend, exactly in the way he has here indicated; maintaining, however, at all times, an entire independence of opinion as to his own ſtyle.

Always conſults friends.

Imitation he heartily dreaded. Five years before he began his "Ferdinand and Iſabella," he ſaid: "Model myſelf upon no manner. A good imitation is diſguſting, — what muſt a bad one be?" "Rely on myſelf for criticiſm of my own compoſitions." "Neither conſult nor imitate any model for ſtyle, but follow my own natural current of expreſſion."

This ſort of independence, however, made him only more rigorous with himſelf. When he had been four months employed on his "Ferdinand and Iſabella," he made this memorandum: —

Two or three faults of ſtyle occur to me in looking over ſome former compoſitions.[4] Too many adjectives; too many couplets of ſubſtantives, as well as adjectives, and perhaps of verbs; too ſet; ſentences too much in the ſame mould; too formal periphraſis inſtead of familiar; ſentences balanced by *ands*, *buts*, and ſemicolons; too many preciſe, emphatic pronouns, as *theſe*, *thoſe*, *which*, &c., inſtead of the particles *the*, *a*, &c.

Minute pains with ſtyle.

He even went into an elaborate inquiry as to the punctuation he ſhould adopt, and as to the proper uſe of capital

[3] I think the tone of theſe remarks about "printed criticiſms" is owing to certain notices of the "Club-Room" that appeared about that time, and which I know ſomewhat annoyed him. He would hardly have made them later, when he wrote an article on Sir Walter Scott, where he ſpeaks very ſlightingly of reviewers and their criticiſms.

[4] Probably articles in the "Club-Room" and the "North American Review."

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initials, recording the whole with care for his own government. But, after all his pains, he failed for a long time to ſatisfy himſelf. Every word he wrote of the early chapters of the "Ferdinand and Iſabella" was rewritten, when he came to prepare that work for the preſs. So was the beginning of the "Mexico," and I think alſo that of the "Peru." One reaſon of this, eſpecially in the firſt inſtance, was, that he thought he had been too elaborate. He early ſaid, "On the whole, I think, with leſs faſtidiouſneſs I ſhould write better." And, long before he publiſhed his "Ferdinand and Iſabella," he deliberately recorded: —

Not to be too elaborate.

With regard to the ſtyle of this work I will only remark that moſt of the defects, ſuch as they are, may be comprehended in the words *trop ſoigné*. At leaſt, they may be traced to this ſource. The only rule is, to write with freedom and nature, even with homelineſs of expreſſion occaſionally, and with alternation of long and ſhort ſentences; for ſuch variety is eſſential to harmony. But, after all, it is not the conſtruction of the ſentence, but the tone of the coloring, which produces the effect. If the ſentiment is warm, lively, forcible, the reader will be carried along without much heed to the arrangement of the periods, which differs exceedingly in different ſtandard writers. Put life into the narrative, if you would have it take. Elaborate and artificial faſtidiouſneſs in the form of expreſſion is highly detrimental to this. A book may be made up of perfect ſentences and yet the general impreſſion be very imperfect. In fine, be engroſſed with the thought, and not with the faſhion of expreſſing it.

As he advanced with his work, he grew leſs and leſs anxious for anything like a formal exactneſs in his ſtyle, or rather, perhaps I ſhould ſay, he became more and more perſuaded of the importance of freedom.

"I am now convinced from experience," he ſays, after four years' trial, "that faſtidious care and preciſion as to ſtyle, when compoſing, are fatal to excellence as well as to rapidity of writing, excluding many not merely legitimate expreſſions, but poſitive graces and beauties of language, as well as nature and eaſe."

No doubt he profited all his life by the pains he early took with his ſtyle, and certainly he never regretted it, minute and troubleſome as it had been. Nor did he ever ceaſe to ſcrutinize

with patience what he had freely compoſed, and to correct it, even in the proof-ſheets, with ſeverity. But undoubtedly, too, his firſt draft in his noctograph was made every year with increaſing boldneſs and eaſe. In this reſpect he was like a perſon who in his childhood has been trained to good manners, and in his riper years proves the gentleneſs of his breeding without remembering or in any way ſhowing the rules by which he had been drilled to it.

Boldneſs and eaſe in writing.

But at laſt the day of reckoning came. "The Hiſtory of Ferdinand and Iſabella," on which he had labored ſo long and ſo conſcientiouſly, was publiſhed, and all the Reviews, or almoſt all of them, made a point of diſcuſſing its ſtyle. None complained, except the "London Quarterly," in which a ſomewhat daſhing, but on the whole brilliant and favorable article appeared, written by Mr. Richard Ford, the diſtinguiſhed Spaniſh ſcholar, with whom afterwards Mr. Preſcott became perſonally acquainted, and enjoyed a pleaſant correſpondence. This article Mr. Preſcott read carefully more than once. It ſomewhat diſturbed his equanimity, and led him to an examination of his ſtyle as compared with that of Engliſh writers whoſe purity and excellence are acknowledged. He gave ſeveral days to the taſk, the unpleaſantneſs of which did not prevent him from making it thorough, and then he recorded his deliberate and ſingularly candid opinion as follows: —

Mr. Ford on Mr. Preſcott's ſtyle.

> The only ſtrictures [in this article] which weigh a feather with me are thoſe on my ſtyle, in forming which I have taken much pains, and of the ſucceſs of which I am not the beſt judge. This I may ſay, however, that of the numerous notices of the work, both in this country and in Europe, while almoſt all have commended more or leſs — and ſome exceſſively — the diction, none, that I am aware, have cenſured it. Many of theſe critics are ſcholars, entirely competent to form a judgment on its merits; more ſo, to judge from their own ſtyles, than the critic in queſtion. I have received and ſeen many letters from ſimilar ſources to the ſame effect. Indeed, the work could not have obtained its rapid and wide popularity, had the execution been *bad* in this all-important reſpect.
>
> I ſay not this to lay a flattering unction to my ſoul, but to put myſelf on my guard againſt raſhly attempting a change in a very important matter on inſufficient grounds, and thus, perhaps, riſking for the future one of the moſt eſſential

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elements of paſt ſucceſs. Nevertheleſs, I have devoted ſeveral days to a careful ſcrutiny of my defects, and to a compariſon of my ſtyle with that of ſtandard Engliſh writers of the preſent time.

Mr. Preſcott examines Mr. Ford's review.

Maſter Ford complains of my text as being too formal, and my notes as having too much levity. This ſhows ſome verſatility in me, at all events. As regards the former, it ſeems to me, the firſt and ſometimes the ſecond volume affords examples of the uſe of words not ſo ſimple as might be; not objectionable in themſelves, but unleſs ſomething is gained in the way of ſtrength or of coloring it is beſt to uſe the moſt ſimple, *unnoticeable* words to expreſs ordinary things; ex. gr. "to ſend" is better than "to tranſmit"; "crown deſcended" better than "devolved"; "guns fired" than "guns diſcharged"; "to name," or "call," than "to nominate"; "to read" than "peruſe"; "the term," or "name," than "appellation," and ſo forth. It is better alſo not to encumber the ſentence with long, lumbering nouns; as, "the relinquiſhment of," inſtead of "relinquiſhing"; "the embelliſhment and fortification of," inſtead of "embelliſhing and fortifying"; and ſo forth. I can diſcern no other warrant for Maſter Ford's criticiſm than the occaſional uſe of theſe and ſimilar words on ſuch commonplace matters as would make the ſimpler forms of expreſſion preferable. In my third volume, I do not find the language open to much cenſure.

Simplicity in words.

Style of notes.

As to the notes, it is doubtleſs bad taſte to ſhock the current of feeling, where there is much ſolemnity or pathos in the text, by unſeaſonable jeſts. But I do not find ſuch in ſuch places. In regard to them I do not find anything to alter in any particular in future.

My concluſion from the whole is, — after a very honeſt and careful examination of the matter, — that the reader may take my ſtyle for better or worſe as it now is formed, and that it is not worth while for me to attempt any alteration in it until I meet a ſafer critic to point out its defects than Maſter Ford.

Not to be anxious about his ſtyle.

One more concluſion is, that I will not hereafter vex myſelf with anxious thoughts about my ſtyle when compoſing. It is formed. And if there be any ground for the imputation that it is too formal, it will only be made worſe in this reſpect by extra-ſolicitude. It is not the defect to which I am prediſpoſed. The beſt ſecurity againſt it is to write with leſs elaboration; a pleaſant recipe, which conforms to my previous views. This determination will ſave me trouble and time. Hereafter what I print ſhall undergo no ordeal for the ſtyle's ſake, except only the grammar, and *that* I may ſafely truſt to my Harvard Aldus. [5]

To the latter part of this deciſion he did not adhere. He aſked counſel to the end of life about his works before they were printed, and corrected them with no leſs care than he had done earlier. But he never interfered with the general characteriſtics of his ſtyle, nor permitted any friend or critic to do it.

Remarks on ſtyle.

"A man's ſtyle," he ſaid, as a final ſettlement of his opinion on the whole

[5] Mr. Folſom.

matter, — "a man's ſtyle, to be worth anything, ſhould be the natural expreſſion of his mental character, and where it is not, the ſtyle is either painfully affected, or it falls into that conventional tone which, like a domino at a maſquerade, or the tone of good-breeding in ſociety, may be aſſumed by anybody that takes pains to acquire it; fitting one perſon as well as another, and belonging to anybody, — nobody. The beſt conſequence of ſuch a ſtyle is, that it offends no one. It delights no one, for it is commonplace. It is true that genius will ſhow itſelf under this coating, as an original will peep out under a domino. But this is not the beſt dreſs for it. The beſt, undoubtedly, for every writer, is the form of expreſſion beſt ſuited to his peculiar turn of thinking, even at ſome hazard of violating the conventional tone of the moſt chaſte and careful writers. It is this alone which can give full force to his thoughts. Franklin's ſtyle would have borne more ornament, — Waſhington Irving could have done with leſs, — Johnſon and Gibbon might have had much leſs formality, and Hume and Goldſmith have occaſionally pointed their ſentences with more effect. But, if they had abandoned the natural ſuggeſtions of their genius, and aimed at the contrary, would they not in mending a hole, as Scott ſays, have very likely made two?

Style of Franklin, Irving, &c.

There are certain faults which no writer muſt commit: falſe metaphors; ſoleciſms of grammar; unmeaning and tautological expreſſions; for theſe contravene the fundamental laws of all writing, the object of which muſt be to expreſs one's ideas clearly and correctly. But, within theſe limits, the wideſt latitude ſhould be allowed to taſte and to the power of unfolding the thoughts of the writer in all their vividneſs and originality. Originality — the originality of nature — compenſates for a thouſand minor blemiſhes.

Faults of ſtyle.

Of one thing a writer may be ſure, if he adopt a manner foreign to his mind he will never pleaſe. Johnſon ſays, 'Whoever would write in a good ſtyle, &c., &c., muſt devote his days and nights to the ſtudy of Addiſon.'[6] Had he done ſo, or had Addiſon formed his ſtyle on Johnſon's, what a ridiculous figure each would have cut! One man's ſtyle will no more fit another, than one man's coat, or hat, or ſhoes will fit another. They will be ſure to be too big, or too ſmall, or too ſomething, that will make the wearer of them ill at eaſe, and probably ridiculous.

Style ſhould belong to the author.

It is very eaſy for a cool, cauſtic critic, like Brougham, to take to pieces the fine goſſamer of Dr. Channing's ſtyle,[7] which has charmed thouſands of readers in this country and in Europe, and the Doctor would be a fool to give up his

Style of Brougham and Channing.

[6] Johnſon is a little more cautious in his phraſeology, but the ſubſtance of his meaning, ſo far as it was needed for the purpoſe in hand, is given in the text with ſufficient preciſion. His exact words are: "Whoever wiſhes to attain an Engliſh ſtyle, *familiar, but not coarſe, and elegant, but not oſtentatious,* muſt give his days and his nights to the volumes of Addiſon." It is the laſt ſentence in Addiſon's Life, and was, no doubt, intended, by its poſition, for a ſort of epigrammatic effect.

[7] This refers to a ſomewhat bitter review of Dr. Channing, in the "Edinburgh" for October, 1829, by Lord Brougham, — a man who could no more comprehend Dr. Channing, as an eminent perſon who knew him well once ſaid, than Dickens could comprehend Laplace.

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glorious myſtifications — if they are ſuch — for the homeſpun, matter-of-fact materials out of which a plainer and leſs imaginative mind would make its tiſſue. It would be impoſſible for Brougham — in his way of writing tolerably ſet and ſometimes pedantic, with an occaſional air of familiarity that matches the reſt of the ſentences badly enough — to aſcend into the regions of the true ſublime, as Dr. Channing does, or to call up ſuch a ſtrong ſenſe of the beautiful. It may be the beſt ſtyle for criticiſm, however, — the beſt for the practical, ordinary uſes of life. But I ſhould not adviſe the Doctor to take it up, and ſtill leſs the Ex-Chancellor to venture into the Doctor's balloon, or — as his admirers might think — his chariot of fire.

Varieties of good ſtyle.

How many varieties of beauty and excellence there are in this world! As many in the mental as the material creation, and it is a pedantic ſpirit which, under the deſpotic name of taſte, would reduce them all to one dull uniform level. A writer who has ſucceeded in gaining the public favor ſhould be cautious how he makes any innovation in his habitual ſtyle. The form of expreſſion is ſo nicely aſſociated with the idea expreſſed, that it is impoſſible to ſay how much of his ſucceſs is owing to the one or the other. It is very certain, however, that *no* work in any of the departments of the belles-lettres can diſpenſe with excellence of ſtyle of ſome kind or other. If this be wanting, a work, however ſound or original in the conception, can hardly be popular, for it cannot give pleaſure or create intereſt, — things eſſential in every kind of compoſition which has not ſcience *excluſively* for its end.

Succeſsful writers not to tamper with their ſtyle.

Let the writer, therefore, who has once ſucceeded in gaining the public ſuffrages, — the ſuffrages of the higher public, the well-educated, — let him beware how he tampers with the ſtyle in which he has before approached them. Let him be ſtill more ſlow to do this in obedience to the ſuggeſtions of a few; for ſtyle is the very thing which, all-important as it is, every well-educated man is competent to judge of. In fact, he had better not make any ſerious innovation in it, unleſs, like Sharon Turner or Jeremy Bentham, it is the object of ſuch univerſal cenſure as ſhows he has ſucceeded in ſpite of it, and not in conſequence of it. Innovation is not reform in writing any more than in politics. The beſt rule is to diſpenſe with all rules except thoſe of grammar, and to conſult the natural bent of one's genius."

Excellence of his remarks.

Saving the laſt ſweeping ſentence, — which I ſuſpect was prompted by the half-play upon the word "rules," and to whoſe doctrine the author of the "Conqueſt of Mexico" and of "Philip the Second" by no means conformed in his own practice, — I do not know where, within the ſame compaſs, ſo much good ſenſe on the ſubject of ſtyle is uttered with ſo much ſpirit and point.

But, whatever we may think of the opinions contained in theſe ſtriking extracts, one fact is plain from them; I mean

that, while their author was willing and even glad to profit by Mr. Ford's criticiſms in the "Quarterly Review," he was thoroughly independent in the uſe he made of them, and thoroughly determined that, at all hazards, his ſtyle ſhould be his own, and ſhould not be materially modified by anybody's unfavorable opinion of it, unleſs he were ſatisfied the opinion was juſt. In this he was right. The ſucceſs of the "Ferdinand and Iſabella" had no doubt given him increaſed confidence in his manner of writing, and the habit of compoſing entirely in his memory had given him both greater freedom and greater facility.[8] But, even before this, his ſtyle had become ſubſtantially what it always was after he was tolerably advanced in the "Ferdinand and Iſabella." It had, in fact, from its firſt proper formation, been ſettled on foundations too deep to be ſhaken.

Inſtead, therefore, of writing more anxiouſly, in conſequence of Mr. Ford's criticiſms, he wrote more freely. While he was employed on his next work, "The Conqueſt of Mexico," he made ſuch memoranda as the following: "I will write *calamo currente*, and not weigh out my words like gold-duſt, which they are far from being." "Be not faſtidious, eſpecially about phraſeology. Do not work for too much euphony. It is loſt in the maſs." "Do not elaborate and *podder* over the ſtyle." "Think more of general effect; don't quiddle."

Deſires freedom of ſtyle.

When the "Mexico" was publiſhed, he found no reaſon to regret the indulgence he had thus granted to himſelf in its compoſition. He learned, at once, from the Reviews and in many other ways, that his manner was regarded as richer, freer, more animated and graceful than it had been in his "Ferdinand and Iſabella." "This," he says, "is a very important fact; for I wrote with much leſs faſtidiouſneſs and elaboration. Yet I rarely wrote without revolving the chapter half a dozen

Style of the "Conqueſt of Mexico."

[8] "Tried to write with imperfect *pre-thinking*, i. e. thinking, as Irving ſaid to me, with a pen. It won't do for bad eyes. It requires too much correcting. The correcting in the mind and writing from memory ſuit my peculiarities bodily, and, I ſuſpect, mental, better than the other proceſs." He was approaching the end of the "Conqueſt of Mexico" when he wrote this.

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times in my mind. But I did not *podder* over particular phraſes. Had I accepted half of my good friend Folſom's corrections, what would have become of my ſtyle? Yet they had, and always will have, their value for accurate analyſis of language and thought."[9]

From this time to the end of his life, — a period of fifteen years, — he makes hardly any memoranda on his ſtyle, and none of any conſequence. Nor was there reaſon why he ſhould. His manner of writing was, from the time he publiſhed "The Conqueſt of Mexico," not only formed but ſanctioned; and ſanctioned, not only by the public at large, but by thoſe whoſe opinion is deciſive. Mr. Milman's review of that work, and the concluſion of one in the "Chriſtian Examiner" by Mr. George T. Curtis, — in both of which the remarks on his ſtyle are very beautiful, and, as I know, gave Mr. Preſcott much pleaſure, — left no doubt in his mind touching this point. Hallam, too, noticed by Sir James Mackintoſh as ſingularly parſimonious in commendation, wrote to Mr. Preſcott, December 29th, 1843: "Your ſtyle appears to me to be nearly perfect." With theſe judgments before him, and others hardly leſs valued and ſafe, he had no motive for reconſidering his ſtyle, if he had deſired, for any reaſon, to do ſo. But he was too wiſe to deſire it.

Hallam.

It may, perhaps, ſeem ſingular to thoſe who knew him little, that ſuch a ſtyle ſhould have been formed by ſuch a proceſs; that the ſevere, minute rules and principles in which it was originally laid ſhould have been, as it were, cavalierly thrown aſide, and a manner, ſometimes gay and ſparkling, ſometimes rich and eloquent, but always natural and eaſy, ſhould have been the reſult. This, however, was characteriſtic of his whole moral conſtitution and conduct, and was in harmony with the principles and habits that in other reſpects governed

His ſtyle formed conſiſtently with his whole character.

9 Mr. Folſom had the excellent habit of noting whatever occurred to him as doubtful, no leſs than what he regarded as a blemiſh, thinking that ſuch minute ſuggeſtions were due to the author. I ſpeak as one who has profited by his ſkill and kindneſs.

his life. Thus every day in his ſtudy he was rigorous with himſelf, and watchful of thoſe he employed; but in his family and with his friends nobody was more free, gay, and unexacting. Thoſe who met him only at the dinner-table, or in general ſociety, would be ſurpriſed to learn that his wine even there was carefully meaſured, and that, if he ſeemed to indulge as much as others did, and to enjoy his indulgence more, it was all upon a ſyſtem ſettled beforehand, juſt as much as was his ſpare every-day diet at home. How vigilant he was in whatever regarded his character; how ſtrictly he called himſelf to account in thoſe ſolitary half-hours on Sunday when he looked over the ſecret record of his failings and faults, we have ſeen; but who ever ſaw reſtraint in his manner when he was with others; who ever ſaw him when he ſeemed to be watchful of himſelf, or to be thinking of the principles that governed his life? And juſt ſo it was with his ſtyle. He wrote rapidly and eaſily. But the rules and principles on which his manner reſted, even down to its ſmalleſt details, had been ſo early and ſo deeply ſettled, that they had become like inſtincts, and were neither recurred to nor needed when he was in the final act of compoſition.[10]

His perſonal character in his ſtyle.

But there was one charm in Mr. Preſcott's ſtyle which, I think, was much felt, without being much underſtood by the great maſs of his readers. He put not a little of his perſonal character into it; a great deal more, I think, than is common with writers of acknowledged eminence. The conſequence was, that the multitudes who knew him in no way except as an author were yet inſenſibly drawn to him by the qualities that made him ſo dear to his friends as a man, and felt, in ſome degree, the attachment that is commonly the reſult only of perſonal intercourſe. They ſeemed to know him more

[10] There are ſome remarks by Mr. Preſcott on purity of ſtyle, in his Memoir of Mr. John Pickering (Maſſachuſetts Hiſtorical Society's Collections, 8vo, Third Series, Vol. X. pp. 210, 211) which are valuable. But they relate chiefly to the danger of Americaniſms, as they are called, Mr. Preſcott maintaining that "one and the ſame language cannot have two ſtandards of purity." See alſo what Mr. Marſh ſays in his excellent Lectures on the Engliſh Language, (1860), pp. 446 ſqq.

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than they know other authors whom they have never ſeen; and as moſt of us have favorite writers without being able always to explain why they are ſuch, he became peculiarly ſo to many, who yet never ſtopped to inquire what was the cauſe of an intereſt ſo agreeable to them.

His infirmity influences his ſtyle in two ways.

To this reſult — the inſenſible communication to his works of ſo much that belonged to himſelf perſonally and to his inmoſt nature — two circumſtances, immediately connected with the infirmity of his ſight, I doubt not, contributed.

Firſt.

The firſt of theſe circumſtances was the long and ſevere thought which he felt himſelf compelled to give in the courſe of his inveſtigation of any ſubject, before he began to write on it. For, after he had collected the materials for any chapter, or other leſs definite portion of his ſubject, — that is, after everything about it in the way of authority or opinion had been read to him, and he had cauſed it all to be embodied in ſhort notes, to which he liſtened again and again, as the only way to make himſelf maſter of their contents, — then he ſat down, as we have ſeen, in ſilence, and gave to the whole the benefit of the moſt vigorous action of his own mind. Being generally unable to look at all at the notes which had been thus prepared for him, he turned every fact or circumſtance in the caſe on which he was employed over and over again in his memory, and examined on every ſide whatever related to it. While doing this, he put the greateſt ſtreſs he was able to put on his faculties, and urged his mind to the moſt concentrated and unbroken action, so as to make ſure that he had maſtered all the details. And this proceſs was ſometimes long-continued. I knew one inſtance in which, after preparatory inveſtigations which occupied only two days, he gave yet three days more to the mere ſhaping and moulding of his materials. The reſult was ſure. The general outline was right, if it was in his power to make it right. But no other proceſs, I ſuppoſe, could have ſo completely digeſted and harmonized his materials, or made them ſo completely a part of himſelf; no other proceſs could have tinged his works ſo largely and ſo deeply with what was

moſt characteriſtic of his own mind and temperament; nothing could have made ſo certain to the reader his love of truth, of juſtice, of liberty, of toleration. And for theſe and other kindred qualities, thus inſenſibly but thoroughly infuſed into the very materials and fabric of his tiſſues, though almoſt never ſeen on their ſurface; the reader, after a little experience, came to truſt the author, and take a perſonal intereſt in him, without conſidering or knowing exactly why he did it. The chord of ſympathy between them was inviſible, indeed, but it was already there, and it was ſtrong enough to hold them together.

Second.

But thus far in the proceſs of his work not a phraſe or ſentence had been adjuſted or thought out. The compoſition, as that word is commonly underſtood, was ſtill to be done. And here again his infirmity was a controlling influence, and is to be counted among the ſecrets of a manner which has been found at once ſo ſimple and ſo charming. He was compelled to prepare everything, down to the ſmalleſt details, in his memory, and to correct and faſhion it all while it was ſtill held there in ſilent ſuſpenſe; after which he wrote it down, by means of his noctograph, in the freest and boldeſt manner, without any opportunity really to change the phraſeology as he went along, and with little power to alter or modify it afterwards. This, I doubt not, was among the principal cauſes of the ſtrength as well as of the grace, eaſe, and attractiveneſs of his ſtyle. It gave a life, a freſhneſs, a freedom, both to his thoughts and to his mode of expreſſing them. It made his compoſition more akin than it could otherwiſe have been to the peculiar fervor and happineſs of extemporaneous diſcuſſion. It not only enabled but it led him to addreſs his reader, as it were, with his natural voice, ſo that thoſe who never heard a word from his lips ſeemed yet, in this way, to find ſomething like its effects in the flow and cadence of his ſentences.

By ſuch proceſſes and habits, Mr. Preſcott's ſtyle, which he began to form with a diſtinct purpoſe in 1822, became, before he had finiſhed the "Ferdinand and Iſabella," fifteen years

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afterwards, in its eſſential characteriſtics, what it is in all his publiſhed hiſtorical works. At firſt, this mode of compoſition — ſo different from the common one of compoſing while the pen is in the author's hand, excited and influenced as moſt writers are, by its mechanical movements, and by the aſſociations they awaken — was difficult and diſagreeable. But I never knew him to give up any good thing for either of theſe reaſons. On the contrary, he always went on the more earneſtly. And the extent to which, in this particular caſe, he ſucceeded, was remarkable. For, as we have ſeen, he was able to carry what was equal to ſixty pages of printed matter in his memory for many days, correcting and finiſhing its ſtyle as he walked or rode or drove for his daily exerciſe.

In 1839, therefore, after going carefully over the whole ground, he ſaid, as we have noticed, "My concluſion is, that the reader may take my ſtyle for better or for worſe, as it now is." And to this concluſion he wiſely adhered. His manner became, perhaps, a little freer and eaſier, from continued practice, and from the confidence that ſucceſs neceſſarily brings with it; but, in its eſſential elements and characteriſtics, it was never changed.

CHAPTER XVII.

1844 – 1845.

Sits for his Portrait and Buſt. — Viſit to New York. — Miſcellaneous Reading. — Materials for the "Conqueſt of Peru." — Begins to write. — Death of his Father. — Its Effect on him. — Reſumes Work. — Letter from Humboldt. — Election into the French Inſtitute, and into the Royal Society of Berlin.

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"AND now," he ſays on the 3d of February, 1844, "now I propoſe to break ground on 'Peru.' I ſhall work the mine, however, at my leiſure. Why ſhould I hurry?" Nor did he. On the contrary, he procraſtinated, as uſual, from an unwillingneſs to begin hard work. He ſat to Mr. Joſeph Ames for his portrait in oils, an excellent piece of coloring, now in the poſſeſſion of Mr. James Lawrence, and to Mr. Richard S. Greenough for a buſt, now in the poſſeſſion of

"Conqueſt of Peru."

Portrait and buſt.

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Mrs. Prescott, beautiful as a work of art, and very valuable as a happy likeness at the period when it was taken. But the sittings to these artists consumed a good deal of time, and broke up many days in February and March. He was, however, too willing to be idle.

Visit to New York.

In the middle of April he made a visit to New York, partly out of listlessness, and partly in order to settle some trifling affairs with his publishers. It was designed to fill only a few days; but, by the solicitations of friends and the eagerness to become acquainted with him on the part of those who had not earlier enjoyed that pleasure, it proved to be a visit of a fortnight, and a very gay and happy one.

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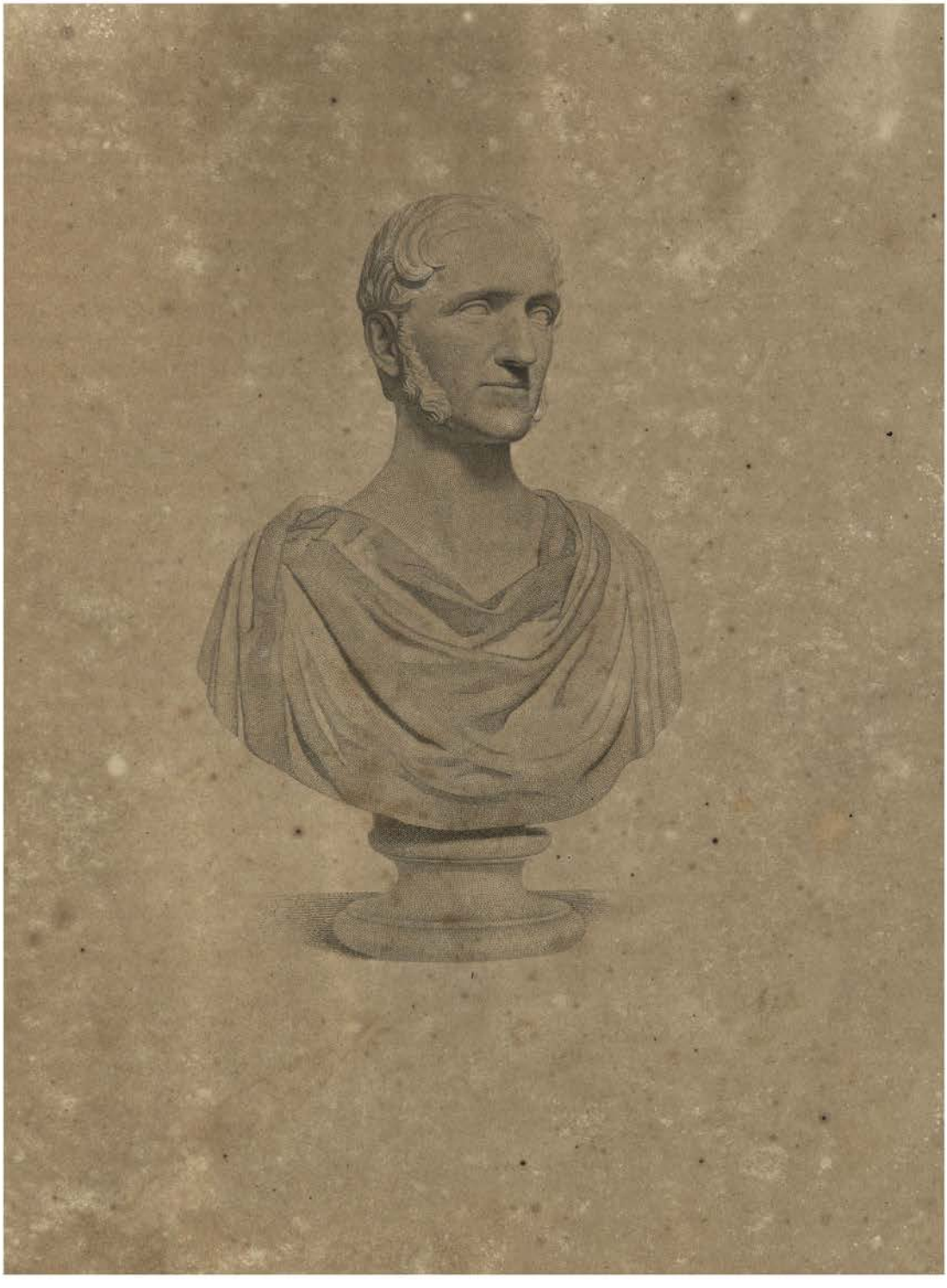
"Three weeks since," he says under date of May 5th, 1844, "I went to New York, thinking I might pass a couple of days. It turned out twelve, and then I found it no easy matter to break away from friends who, during my stay there, feasted and fêted me to the top of my constitution. Not a day in which I rose before nine, dined before five or six, went to bed before twelve. Two years ago I did not know half a dozen New-Yorkers; I have now made the acquaintance of two hundred at least, and the friendship, I trust, of many. The cordiality with which I was greeted is one of the most gratifying tributes I have received from my countrymen, coming as it did from all classes and professions. Archbishop Hughes. It pleased me that the head of the Roman Catholic clergy, Archbishop Hughes, a highly respectable person, should openly thank and commend me for 'the liberality I had shown in my treatment of the Catholics.'[1] I have stood the tug of social war pretty well. Yet, on the whole, it was too long a time for such excitement. Five days should be the limit. The faculties become weary, and the time does not move so fleetly as in the regular occupations at home. How could I stand then a season in London? I shall not try. Nor shall I ever exceed two, or at most three days, in a great American city."

During all this time — I mean during the autumn, winter, and spring of 1843 and 1844 — he thought very little of his

[1] In connection with this well-deserved commendation from a man so eminent, may be aptly mentioned a remark which the late President John Quincy Adams made to Mr. Edmund B. Otis, who, during four years, rendered excellent and kind service to Mr. Prescott, as his secretary. "Mr. Adams said, that Mr. Prescott possessed the two great qualifications of an historian, who should be apparently without country and without religion. This," Mr. Otis adds, "he explained by saying that the history should not show the political or religious bias of the historian. It would be difficult, Mr. Adams thought, to tell whether Mr. Prescott were a Protestant or a Catholic, a monarchist or a republican." See Appendix (C).



"Conqueſt of Peru." He even, for a large part of the period, made few entries among his literary memoranda; and when he began the record again, after an abſolute ſilence of almoſt three months, he ſays, in relation to this unwonted neglect, that it was indeed a very long interval, and that ſuch long intervals were proof either of great occupation or great idleneſs. "The latter," he adds, "will account for this."

Want of induſtry.

He had, however, not been ſo wholly idle as ſuch ſelf-reproach might ſeem to imply. He had liſtened to the Inca Garcilaſſo's important Commentaries on the earlieſt hiſtory and traditions of Peru; to ſome of the more familiar and common writers who cover the ſame ground; and to a manuſcript of Sarmiento, Preſident of the Royal Council of the Indies, who had travelled in that part of South America immediately after its conqueſt, and who is one of the moſt ample and truſtworthy authorities for its early condition. It was not, indeed, much to have accompliſhed in ſo long a time, nor was any of it difficult or diſagreeable; but his interruptions had been many and inevitable. During his father's illneſs he had watched him with a care that interfered not a little with his own regular occupations, and during his convaleſcence had accompanied him in many a long walk, from which he derived no little pleaſure and conſolation. But his father, whoſe faculties had not been impaired by his illneſs, was now reſtored to as much phyſical health as he was ever likely to enjoy, and, from his nature, rather preferred to be independent in his out-of-door exerciſe than to be aſſiſted or accompanied. The ſon, therefore, after nine months of "literary loafing," as he called it, inſtead of three, which he had propoſed to himſelf, turned reſolutely to his new work.

Books he read.

Mr. Preſcott, ſenior.

He did not need to make a collection of materials for it. That had been done when he gathered his ample ſtores for the "Conqueſt of Mexico." His firſt ſtudies were on Cieza de Leon, the careful geographer of Peru, contemporary almoſt with its conqueſt; on Diego Fernandez de Palencia, a ſomewhat tedious chronicler of the country at the ſame period;

Studies for the "Conqueſt of Peru."

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on Fernando Monteſinos, who lived a century later, and is much leſs truſtworthy; and on the crude collections of Lord Kingſborough, made in our own time, but marked with the credulity and raſhneſs of the time of the Pizarros. This reading, and more of the ſame ſort during the ſummer of 1844, all related to the mythical rather than to the hiſtorical period of Peruvian Antiquities; and before the month of Auguſt was ended the mere notes and references for this part of his ſubject filled above three hundred compact pages. It was not, indeed, ſo important as the correſponding period of the Mexican annals, but it was intereſting, and had its peculiar attractions. He made his plan for it, accordingly, and, having accumulated notes to the amount of eighty large ſheets, allowed five or ſix months for the work, and a hundred pages. But here, as in the caſe of the "Mexico," he was miſtaken, although his error was leſs conſiderable. It took eight months and made a hundred and eighty pages; more troubleſome and diſagreeable from the nature of the ſubject than any other part of the work, and in ſome reſpects more ſo than the Introduction to the "Conqueſt of Mexico."

Early period of Peruvian civilization.

But before he could put pen to paper, the courſe of his ſtudies was again interrupted, firſt by the death of his brother Edward,[2] which occurred at ſea on a voyage to Europe, and afterwards by a journey to Niagara on account of his daughter's health, which for ſome months had given cauſe for anxiety. At laſt, however, after reading Alfieri's life to quicken his courage, he began his work in earneſt. "I find it very difficult," he ſaid, "to ſcrew up my wits to the hiſtoric pitch; ſo much for the vagabond life I have been leading; and breaking ground on a new ſubject is always a dreary buſineſs."

Death of his brother.

Journey to Niagara.

Reads Alfieri's Life.

He wrote the firſt ſentences on the 12th of Auguſt, 1844, a little more than a year from the time when he had completed his "Conqueſt of Mexico." He was at Nahant, where — what with the rheumatiſm which often troubled him much in that damp climate, and the interruptions of company, which

Begins to write the "Conqueſt of Peru."

[2] For a notice of his brother Edward, ſee Appendix (A), on the Preſcott family.

at such a watering-place could not always be avoided, he found his progress both slow and uneasy. But he made vigorous efforts with himself, and succeeded, before he left the sea-shore, so far as to make the following record: —

Industry good, and with increased interest. Spirits — an amiable word for temper — improved. Best recipe, occupation with things, not self.

Pepperell.

At Pepperell, where, as was his custom, he passed the early autumn, he pursued his labors in a manner still more satisfactory to himself.

"Industry," he says, referring to the good effects of a tranquil country-life, — "industry, as usual, excellent; interest awakened; progress sensible; the steam is up."

And again a few days later: —

I have got my working-tackle on board, and should be delighted not to quit these highland solitudes till they are buried under snow-drifts. Now, how glorious they are to eye and ear and every other sense, — the glories of an American autumn. Surely a man is better, and forms a better estimate of life and its worthlessness here in the country than anywhere else.

Boston.

The town, as he anticipated, was less favorable to work. When he had been there some time, he noted: "Nearly three weeks in town, and not looked at 'Peru.' The old sin of the town. Shall I never reform?" Still, after the pressure of affairs which had accumulated during his absence was removed, and a little gay lounging among his friends was over, he was going on well again, when he was stopped by a great sorrow. His father died suddenly on Sunday morning, the 8th of December, and an hour afterwards I received from him the following note: —

Death of Mr. Prescott, senior.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I write to tell you, what you may learn from other sources, and what will give you much pain. My father was taken with a fainting turn this morning, about eight o'clock, which has terminated fatally. Nathan, who takes this, will give you the account.

We are all very tranquil, as my writing to you now shows. Do not come till after church, as nothing can be done now.

Your affectionate

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

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Effect of his father's death.

I went to him, of courſe, as ſoon as the morning ſervices were over, and found him tranquil, indeed, but more tenderly and more eaſily moved than I had ever ſeen him before, and more than I ever ſaw him afterwards. His mind was ſorrowfully filled with the thought of the great tie that had been ſo ſuddenly broken, and of the conſequences that muſt follow. He could talk only of his father or of his deſolate mother; and, although I ſaw him again before the day was ended, and each ſucceeding day afterwards for ſome time, it was ſtill the ſame. He was unable to think continuouſly on any other ſubject. There was, however, nothing violent or extravagant in his ſorrow. He ſaw things as they really were. He did not ſeem ſo much oppreſſed with the idea of his immediate loſs, as with the idea that it was one he ſhould never ceaſe to feel. And in this he judged himſelf rightly. He was always afterwards more or leſs ſenſible of the void that had been left by the death of his father, and recurred to it frequently in converſation with me, down even to one of the laſt times I ſaw him.

Evening after the funeral.

The evening after the funeral there ſeemed to be more of bitterneſs in his grief than there had been before. The day had been raw and cheerleſs, with much wind and duſt in the ſtreets as the proceſſion paſſed along. His eye had been ſeriouſly troubled by it, and was ſtill painful. I noticed how cloſe he had followed the body as we turned in, all on foot, to enter the crypt under St. Paul's Church, and that his head at that moment was almoſt brought in contact with the ſad drapery of the hearſe. "Yes," he ſaid, "my eye ſuffered very much from the wind and duſt that came out of the paſſage, and *he* protected me to the laſt, as he always had."

Occupation.

It was long before he could ſettle himſelf to his work again. The world had aſſumed a new look to him, and its ways ſeemed harder to tread. Burdens were hereafter to reſt on his ſhoulders which had earlier been borne by another. Counſels were to fail on which he had always relied. Much buſineſs was to be done requiring both time and thought.

More than two months, therefore, elapſed before he returned to his literary labors, and when he did he found it impoſſible to recover, in a manner at all ſatisfactory to himſelf, the thoughts with which he had intended to go on, and which, before his father's death, lay all ſettled and ſpread out in his memory. He found, as he ſaid, that they had been effaced as completely as if they had been wiped out by a ſponge. He began, therefore, a new chapter, without abſolutely finiſhing the one on which he had till then been employed.

Difficulty of beginning to work again.

He was ſoon cheered on his courſe by the following letter from Alexander von Humboldt, which he juſtly deemed "as high a recompenſe as he could receive in this way": —

Monsieur,

Dans la crainte, que peut être la première expreſſion de ma juſte admiration, addreſſée, au moment où je reçevais votre important ouvrage ſur le Méxique, ne vous ſoit pas parvenue, je donne ce peu de lignes à Monſ. Lieber, qui nous eſt cher, et qui part pour votre beau pays. Après avoir déployé le grand et noble talent d'hiſtorien de l'Europe dans la Vie de Ferdinand et d'Iſabelle, — après avoir retracé des évènements que les calamités recentes de l'Eſpagne rendent doublement inſtructives aux peuples "qui oublient et apprennent peu," — Monſ. Preſcott a daigné jetter une vive lumière ſur un pays qui a eu l'indepen-dance avant les éléments de la liberté civile; mais auquel je tiens par tous les liens de la reconnaiſſance et des ſouvenirs, croyant avoir le faible mérite d'avoir fait connaître le premier, par des obſervations aſtronomiques et des meſures de hauteur, la merveilleuſe configuration du Méxique, et le reflêt de cette configu-ration ſur les progrès et les entrâves de la civilization. Ma ſatisfaction a été bien grande en étudiant ligne par ligne votre excellent ouvrage, Monſieur. On eſt un juge ſévère, ſouvent enclin à l'injuſtice, lorſqu'on a eu la vivante im-preſſion des lieux et que l'étude de l'hiſtoire antique dont je me ſuis occupée avec prédilection a été ſuivie ſur le ſol même, où une partie des grands événe-ments s'eſt paſſée. La ſévérité eſt deſarmée, Monſieur, à la lecture de votre "Conquête du Méxique." Vous peignez avec ſuccès parce que vous avez *vu* des yeux de l'eſprit, du ſens intérieur. C'eſt un bonheur pour moi, citoyen du Méxique, d'avoir vécu aſſez longtemps pour vous lire; pour vous parler de ma reconnaiſſance des expreſſions de bienveillance dont vous avez honoré mon nom. L'Amérique Eſpagnole, bien malheureuſe aujourd'hui, dechirée par d'ignobles guerres inteſtines — trop grande heureuſement, pour que l'importation d'un joug étranger ſoit poſſible — trouvera avec toute ſociété humaine ſon équilibre in-térieur. Je ne déſeſpère pas. Je dirai avec Chriſtophe Colomb, dans le rêve à la rivière de Belem: Que le Seigneur tient dans ſon pouvoir une longue

"Ferdinand and Iſabella."

Mexico.

Spaniſh America.

Columbus.

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hérédité d'années; muchas heredades tiene el Señor y grandiſimas.[3] Si je n'étais tout occupé de mon Coſmos — d'une Phyſique du Monde — que j'ai l'imprudence d'imprimer, j'aurais voulu traduire votre ouvrage dans la langue de mon pays.

Je ſuis heureux de ſavoir que votre ſanté s'eſt ſolidement améliorée, et que nous pouvons éſpérer vos travaux ſur le Pérou et ſon antique et myſtérieuſe civilization.

Agréez, Monſieur, je vous prie, l'expreſſion renouvelée du reſpectueux attachement avec lequel j'ai l'honneur d'être,

Monſieur,

Votre très humble et très obéiſſant ſerviteur,

ALEXANDRE DE HUMBOLDT.

A Sans Souci, ce 26 Octobre, 1844.

On devrait ſe rappeler un jour, que lorſque j'ai publié mon Atlas du Méxique et l'Eſſai Politique il n'exiſtait aucune autre carte du pays, que celle qu'Alzate a offert à l'Académie des Sciences à Paris.

Such a letter was, as he intimated, an honor ſecond to few that he could receive. Other honors, however, were not wanting. Four months later — in February, 1845 — he was elected into the French Inſtitute, as a Correſponding Member of the Academy of Moral and Political Science, and into the Royal Society of Berlin, as a Correſponding Member of the Claſs of Philoſophy and Hiſtory. He had no intimation of either until he received the diploma announcing it; and it was not until ſome weeks afterwards, April 23, 1845, that he made the following entry among his literary memoranda: —

French Inſtitute.

Royal Society of Berlin.

In my lazineſs I forgot to record the greateſt academic honor I have received, — the greateſt I ſhall ever receive, — my election as Correſponding Member of the French Inſtitute, as one of the Academy of Moral and Political Science.

[3] The words which Humboldt has here cited from memory, and which he has a little ſpiritualized, are found in a letter which Columbus wrote from Jamaica, July 7, 1503, to Ferdinand and Iſabella, giving an eloquent and ſolemn account of a viſion which he believed himſelf to have had on the coaſt of Veragua, — one of the magnificent illuſions which occaſionally filled his mind, and perſuaded him that he was inſpired and commiſſioned of Heaven to diſcover the paſſage to the Indies, and perhaps the terreſtrial paradiſe. The exact words referred to by Humboldt are, *muchas heredades tiene El, grandiſimas.* They refer to God, and, with the context, intimate that Columbus himſelf was to receive ſome of theſe reſerved "heredades," — *poſſeſſions*, or *inheritances*.

I was chosen to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of the illustrious Navarrete. This circumstance, together with the fact, that I did not canvass for the election, as is very usual with the candidates, makes the compliment the more grateful to me.

By the last steamer I received a diploma from the Royal Society of Berlin also, as Corresponding Member of the Class of Philosophy and History. This body, over which Humboldt presides, and which has been made famous by the learned labors of Niebuhr, Von Raumer, Ranke, &c., &c., ranks next to the Institute among the great Academies of the Continent. Such testimonies, from a distant land, are the real rewards of a scholar. What pleasure would they have given to my dear father! I feel as if they came too late!

Similar remarks, as to the regret he felt that his father could no longer share such honors with him, he had made earlier to more than one of his friends, with no little emotion.[4] They were honors of which he was always naturally and justly proud, — for they had been vouchsafed neither to Bowditch nor to Irving, — but sorrow for a time dimmed their brightness to him. As Montaigne said on the death of Charron, "We had everything in common, and, now that he is gone, I feel as if I had no right to his part."

Of the election at Berlin, which, according to the diploma, was made in February, 1845, I have no details; but at Paris, I believe, the forms were those regularly observed. On the 18th of January, 1845, M. Mignet, on behalf of the Section of History, reported to the Academy of Moral and Political Science the names of those who were proposed as candidates to fill the place of Navarrete, who had died the preceding year; viz. in the first rank, Mr. Prescott; in the second rank, *ex æquo*, Mr. Turner and Mr. Bancroft; in the third, Mr. Dahlmann. M. Mignet at this meeting explained the grounds for his report, and the President inquired whether the Academy

Details of election.

[4] This seems, indeed, to have been his first feeling on receiving the intelligence. Dr. George Hayward, the distinguished surgeon, met him on the steps of the post-office as he came with the official notice of his election to the Institute in his hand, and told me a few days afterwards, that, while Mr. Prescott showed without hesitation how agreeable to him was the intelligence he had received, he added immediately a strong expression of his regret that the unsolicited and unexpected honor had not come to him before the death of his father. Mr. Parsons, Mr. Prescott's early friend, has sent me a statement somewhat similar. Both agree entirely with my own recollections and those of his family, as to his feelings at the same period.

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would confine itself to the list of candidates thus offered. M. Bérenger,[5] without proposing to add the name of M. Cesare Cantù, called the attention of the Section to his claims. M. Mignet and M. Cousin then spoke, and the subject was passed over. At the next meeting, — that of January 25th, — when the subject came up in course, no discussion took place; and on the 1st of February, when the election was made, Mr. Prescott was chosen by eighteen ballots out of twenty, one being for Mr. Bancroft and one blank.

Col. Aspinwall.

In a letter of business to his friend, Colonel Aspinwall, at London, dated March 30th, Mr. Prescott says, with his accustomed frankness: —

> You will be pleased to learn that by the last steamer I received a diploma of Corresponding Member of the Institute of France, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of the Spanish historian Navarrete. This academic honor is often canvassed pretty zealously for; but, as I got it without the asking on my part, it is the more welcome. I don't know how they came to think of an out-of-the-way Yankee for it. [6]

MEMORANDA.

1844.

State of New York.

June 30, 1844. — Nahant, where lighted the 28th. Returned from my tour to Trenton and Niagara Falls on the 25th, being fifteen days. A most romantic excursion of eleven hundred miles through the whole length of the great Empire State, which the traveller sees in all its glory of vegetation and wonderful fertility, — its noble streams, lofty woods, and matchless cataracts, — the valley of the Mohawk, the broad Hudson, with its navy of little vessels, the Erie Canal, winding like a silver snake through its cultivated fields, — its cities and villages rising up like fairy creations in the wide expanse of its clearings, and all the evidences of a busy, thriving population amidst the wreck of gigantic forests, that show the contest with savage nature had not been of very long date. It is indeed the "Empire State," and Niagara is a fitting termination to such a noble tour. But I grow twaddling. A pleasant tour of a couple of weeks — not more — with pleasant companions (mine were so), is not a bad break into the still life of the student. It gives zest to the quiet course of literary labor. Yet it is not easy, after such a vagabond life, to come up to the scratch. The hide gets somewhat insensible to the spur of lofty ambition, — that last infirmity which the poet speaks of. Yet may I never be insensible to it.

Hard to work.

[5] Not the poet, who spelt his name differently, but a distinguished jurist and statesman.

[6] See Appendix (D), for other literary honors.

July 21, 1844. — Industry and literary ardor improve. Been reading, or rather listening to, Alfieri's Life, — a strange being, with three ruling passions, literary glory, love, and horses! the last not the least powerful. His literary zeal — by fits only, it is true — is quite stimulating, and, like Gibbon's Memoirs, rouses the dormant spark in me. It is well occasionally to *reinvigorate* by the perusal of works so stirring to the flagging student. I ought not to flag with such an audience as I am now sure to have. Life out of Boston, whether at Nahant or Pepperell, very favorable to regular studious habits and scholar-like ardor. My *ideal* would be best accomplished by a full six months' residence in the quiet country. But would my general vigor, and especially that of the stomach, allow it? I fear not. This is a good place for effective work, even in the dog-days. But my eyes are better in the country, and rheumatism becomes a formidable enemy on these bleak and misty shores.

Life in the country.

The face of nature, whether here or in the country, is most tranquillizing, and leads to contemplative occupation. I feel as if my studies, family, and the sight of a few friends, — *non brevi intervallo*, — not convivial friends, would answer all my desires, and best keep alive the best source of happiness in me; literary ambition, not the mere ambition of fame, — I have obtained that, — but of advancing the interests of humanity by the diffusion of useful truth. I have been more truly gratified by several messages I have received since the publication of the 'Conquest,' thanking me for the solace I had afforded in a sick-chamber, than by commendations from higher sources. Yet I read with satisfaction a passage in our Minister Wheaton's letter from Berlin this week, in which he says: 'M. de Humboldt never ceases praising your book, and he is not a little difficult in his judgment of those who venture on his American ground.' Humboldt is the most competent critic my work has to encounter.

Solace to the suffering.

Humboldt.

This week I have been reviewing my notes for the Introduction, already reaching to seventy sheets, and not done yet. I have been arranging under what heads I must distribute this *farrago* of facts and fiction. The work of distribution, by the appropriate figure for each sentence, will be no joke.

"Conquest of Peru."

Been to town twice last week, — most uncommon for me, — once to see my friend Calderon, returned as Minister from Spain, and once to see my poor friend Sumner, who has had a sentence of death passed on him by the physicians. His sister sat by his side, struck with the same disease. It was an affecting sight to see brother and sister, thus hand in hand, preparing to walk through the dark valley.[7] I shall lose a good friend in Sumner, and one who, though I have known him but a few years, has done me many kind offices.

Mr. Charles Sumner.

August 18, 1844. — Began Chapter I. of Book I., the Introduction of the "Conquest of Peru," on Monday, August 12th; wrote 8 noctograph = 10 pp. print, — slow work and not particularly to my mind either. I have found it best to alter my plan, and throw military policy into another chapter, and continue this chapter by treating of the civil administration, else it comes cart before the horse.

"Conquest of Peru."

[7] It is not necessary to say that Mr. Sumner recovered from this attack. The prognostications relating to his sister were unhappily fulfilled.

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Literary occupation.

Little journeying.

My ſpirits this ſeaſon at Nahant have been variable, and my temper ditto; I am convinced that I am to expect contentment only, or rather chiefly, from *ſteady and engroſſing literary occupation.* When one work is finiſhed, don't pauſe too long before another is begun, and ſo on till eyes, ears, and ſenſe give way; then reſignation! I doubt even the policy of annual journeys; am clear againſt epiſodical excurſions for a few days in addition to the one journey of two weeks at moſt. I ſuſpect my ſummer migrations for reſidence will be enough for health, and better for ſpirits. Locomotion *riles* up all the wits, till they are as muddy as a dirt-puddle, and they don't ſettle again in a hurry. Is it not enough to occupy myſelf with my hiſtorical purſuits, varying the ſcene by change of reſidence ſuited to the ſeaſon, and by occaſionally entertaining and going into ſociety, — occaſionally, not often? What a curſed place this is for rheumatiſm and company, yet good for general vigor. No dog-days here, and all might be working-days if I had pluck for it.

TO DON PASCUAL DE GAYANGOS.

Pepperell, Oct. 13, 1844.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Simancas.

I am glad to receive your very kind letter of Auguſt 28th, and to learn that you have at length accompliſhed the *reſidencia* at Simancas. Fifty-two days was a long while, and, if you had had the command of all your time, would have enabled you to have ſifted, at the rapid rate at which you go on, half the library. But what abſurd rules! I think you made the moſt of that precious hour allowed for the *papeles reſervados.* Your uſe of ciphers ſtood you in good ſtead. It was a rare piece of fortune to have ſtumbled on ſuch a budget, which nobody elſe has. But how can a government wiſh to exclude the light from thoſe who are occupied with illuſtrating its hiſtory, neceſſarily compelling the hiſtorian to take partial and limited views, and that, too, of events three hundred years old! There will be a great *traſtorno* when the archives are poured into the Eſcorial.[8]

TO COUNT ADOLPHE DE CIRCOURT.

Boſton, Jan. 30, 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,

Articles of Count Circourt.

I am truly obliged by your kind letter, and the beautiful pieces of criticiſm from your pen which accompanied it. I have read them with the greateſt pleaſure. The account of the Venetian language is full of novel hiſtorical details, as well as of architectural criticiſms, that carry me back to thoſe witching ſcenes where in earlier life I paſſed ſome very happy days. The ſketch of the German paſtor Hebel is conceived in the tranquil and beautiful ſpirit which ſo

[8] It was propoſed to remove the collections of Simancas to the Eſcorial, and there unite all the documents of the kingdom relating to the national hiſtory, as had been ſo admirably done in Seville for the hiſtory of Spaniſh America.

well accords with his own life and character. And the tranſlations of the Tartar poems have all the freſhneſs of original compoſition, with a ſingular coloring of thought altogether different from the European. Why do you not gather theſe little gems of criticiſm together, which you thus ſcatter at random, into one collection, where they may be preſerved as the emanation of one and the ſame mind? I was talking this over with Ticknor the other day, and we both agreed that few volumes of any one author would preſent ſuch a rich variety of criticiſm and diſquiſition on intereſting and very diverſified topics. And yet you write with the eaſe and fulneſs of one who had made each of theſe topics his particular ſtudy. I aſſure you I am ſaying to you what I have ſaid to our common friend, and he, with a ſuperior judgment to mine, fully confirmed.

Michel Chevalier.

I muſt alſo thank you for M. Chevalier's article in the "Journal des Débats," which contains a ſpirited analyſis of my hiſtorical ſubject. It is very kind in him to beſtow ſo much time on it, and I have now written to thank him, and ſhall requeſt his acceptance of a copy of the American edition of the work, which I ſhall ſend this week by the New York packet, with another copy to the French tranſlator. I eſteem myſelf fortunate in the proſpect of ſeeing my thoughts clothed in the beautiful tongue of Racine and Rouſſeau. Did I mention to you that the work is in proceſs of tranſlation in Berlin and in Rome? In Mexico, a Spaniſh tranſlator has undertaken to make ſuch alterations (according to his proſpectus) as ſhall accommodate my religious ideas and my opinions of modern Mexico more ſatisfactorily to the popular taſte!

Should you find leiſure to write the notice which you contemplate in the "Bibliothèque Univerſelle," you will, of courſe, have the kindneſs to forward me a copy; though I truſt you will not allow this ſubject to make ſuch demands on your time as my former hiſtory did, or elſe the publication of a new work by me will be no day of jubilee to you.

A little while before I had the pleaſure of receiving your letter, I met with a domeſtic calamity of which I ſhall allow myſelf to ſpeak to one who has ſhown ſuch a friendly intereſt in my literary reputation. This is the death of my father, who has been my conſtant companion, counſellor, and friend from childhood to the preſent time; for we have always lived under the ſame roof together. As he had the moſt cultivated taſtes himſelf, and took the deepeſt intereſt in my literary career, his ſympathy had become almoſt a neceſſary part of my exiſtence; and now that he is gone life wears a new aſpect, and I feel that much of the incentive and the recompenſe of my labors is withdrawn from me. But I have no right to complain; he was ſpared to me, in the full poſſeſſion of his powers of head and heart, to a good old age. I take the liberty to encloſe you a little obituary notice of him from the pen of our friend Ticknor, as I know you will read what he has written with pleaſure, and it gratifies my own feelings to think that one for whom I feel as high a regard as yourſelf, in a diſtant land, ſhould hold my father's name in honor. I hope you will not think this is a weakneſs.

Death of Mr. Preſcott, ſenior.

I pray you, my dear Sir, to accept the aſſurance of the ſincere reſpect with which I remain

Your obliged friend,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

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MEMORANDA.

Death of Mr. Prescott, senior.

February 6, 1845. — A long interval since my last entry, and one pregnant with important and most melancholy results to me, for in it I have lost my father, my counsellor, companion, and friend from boyhood to the hour of his death. This event took place on Sunday morning, about eight o'clock, December 8th, 1844. I had the sad comfort of being with him in his last moments, and of witnessing his tranquil and beautiful death. It was in keeping with the whole tenor of his mild and philosophical life. He had complained of a slight obstruction or uneasiness in his left side for ten days before, and the bad weather confined him in the house, and prevented his getting his customary exercise. The physicians thought it a rheumatic affection. But he did not feel confidence in this. His strength became impaired by confinement, and half an hour before his death, while in the library in which he spent so many happy and profitable hours of his life, he was taken with a faintness. His old domestic, Nathan Webster, was there with him, and immediately ran for assistance. My father recovered, but soon after relapsed. He was laid on the floor, and we were all apprehensive of a recurrence of the melancholy attack with which he had been visited at Pepperell, the year preceding. But his mind was not affected otherwise than with the languor approaching to insensibility which belongs to faintness. On the speedy arrival of the physician he was carried upstairs to his own apartment, in the arms of the family, and in fifteen minutes his spirit took its departure to a happier world. On an examination, it was found that the arteries leading from the heart had not conducted off the blood, and the pressure of this had caused the uneasy sensation. The machinery was worn out. The clock — to borrow the simile of the poet — had run down, and stopped of its own accord.

He lived to a good old age, being eighty-two August 19th, 1844, and we have certainly great reason for gratitude that he was spared to us so long, and that he did not, even then, outlive his noble faculties. To have survived the decay of his mind would have been a blow which even he, with all his resignation, could not well have borne. But the temporary cloud of the preceding year had passed away, and he died in the full possession of the powers which he has now returned, strengthened and increased by unceasing industry and careful cultivation, into the hands of his merciful Father. Yet, though there is much, very much to be thankful for, it is only time that can reconcile me to the rupture of a tie that has so long bound us closely together. It is a great satisfaction that his eminent virtues have been so justly appreciated by the community in which he lived. Rarely has a death excited such wide and sincere sorrow. For his high intellectual character commanded respect; but his moral qualities, his purity of principle, his high sense of honor, his sympathy with others, especially those who stood most in need of it, insured veneration and love. Yet those only who have dwelt under his roof, and enjoyed the sweet pleasures of the most intimate domestic intercourse, can estimate the real extent of his excellence. The nearer the intimacy, the deeper and more constant was the impression produced by his virtues. His character stood the test of daily, hourly inspection.

Character.

It would be moſt ungrateful in me not to acknowledge the goodneſs of that Providence which has ſpared ſuch a friend to be the guide of my ſteps in youth, and my counſellor in riper years. And now that he is gone, it muſt be my duty and my pleaſure to profit by this long intercourſe, and to guide myſelf through the reſt of my pilgrimage by the memory of his precepts and the light of his example. He ſtill lives, and it muſt be my care ſo to live on earth as to be united with him again and forever.

I have not felt in heart to reſume my hiſtorical labors ſince his death, and my time has been much engroſſed by neceſſary attention to family affairs. But I muſt no longer delay to return to my ſtudies, although my intereſt in them is much diminiſhed, now that I have loſt my beſt recompenſe of ſucceſs in his approbation. Yet to defer this longer would be weakneſs. It will at leaſt be a ſatisfaction to me to purſue the literary career in which he took ſo much intereſt, and the ſucceſs of which, it is moſt conſoling for me to believe, ſhed a ray of pleaſure on the evening of his days.

Studies.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1844 – 1845.

Publication of a Volume of Miſcellanies. — Italian Literature. — Controverſy with Da Ponte. — Charles Brockden Brown. — Blind Aſylum. — Molière. — Cervantes. — Scott. — Irving. — Bancroft. — Madame Calderon. — Hiſtory of Spaniſh Literature. — Opinions of Review-writing.

CHAP. XVIII. 1844. ÆT. 48.

Miſcellanies.

JUST at this time — the winter of 1844 – 5 — Mr. Preſcott made an arrangement with Bentley in London for publiſhing a volume of Miſcellanies, entitled in the Engliſh edition, "Critical and Hiſtorical Eſſays"; chiefly articles from the "North American Review," for which, though his contributions had already become rare, and ſubſequently ceaſed altogether, he wrote with ſome regularity for many years.

The ſubjects he had diſcuſſed were almoſt wholly literary, and, having little relation to anything local, political, or perſonal, were likely, on many accounts, to be read with intereſt in England. He therefore ſelected a few of his contributions as a ſpecimen, and ſent them to his friend Colonel Aſpinwall, in London, with a good-humored letter, dated November 15th, 1844, in which he ſays: —

His own opinion of them.

As the things are already in print, and ſtale enough here, I can't expect the London publiſhers will give much for them. Poſſibly they may not be willing to give a farthing. I would not adviſe them to. But you will probably think beſt to aſk ſomething, as I ſhall ſtill have to ſelect and dreſs them up a little.

But, though I will not insist on a compensation if I can't get it, I had rather not have them published than to have them appear in a form which will not match with my other volumes in size. I would add, that at all events I should be allowed a dozen copies for myself. If Bentley, who should have the preference, or Murray, do not think them worth the taking, I would not go farther with the trumpery. Only, pray see that they are returned safely to your hands to be destroyed.

Now, I hope this will not put you to much trouble. It is not worth it, and I do not intend it. Better accede to any proposition, — as far as profits are concerned, they must be so trifling, — than be bothered with negotiations. And, after all, it may be thought this *rechauffé* of old bones is not profitable enough to make it worth while for a publisher to undertake it at all. If so, I shall readily acquiesce. There will be no labor lost.

Bentley.

Bentley, however, thought better of the speculation than the author did, and accepted, with a just *honorarium*, the whole of what, a few months later, was sent to him. It made a handsome octavo volume, and appeared in the summer of 1845; but there was prefixed to it an engraved portrait, which, though great pains were taken to have it a good one, was a total failure.[1] The articles were fourteen in number, marking very well the course of the author's studies, tastes, and associations during the preceding twenty years. Some of them had cost him no little labor; all were written with a conscientious fidelity not common in such contributions to the periodical press. They were therefore successful from the first, and have continued to be so. An edition by the Harpers at New York appeared contemporaneously with Bentley's; a second London edition was called for in 1850; and these have been followed by others both in England and the United States, making in all, before the end of 1860, a sale of more than thirteen thousand copies. The misgivings of the author, therefore, about his "*rechauffé* of old bones" were soon discovered to be groundless.

Harpers.

Italian narrative poetry.

The first article in the volume, reckoning by the date of its composition, is on "Italian Narrative Poetry," and was originally published in the "North American Review" for

[1] When he sent me a copy of the English edition, he said, in the note accompanying it: "You will recognize everything in it except the portrait."

CHAP. XVIII. 1845. ÆT. 49.

October, 1824. At that time, or a little earlier, Mr. Prescott had, it will be remembered, occupied himself much with the literature of Italy, and, among other things, had taken great pleasure in listening to an accomplished Italian, who had read parts of Dante, Tasso, Arioſto, and Alfieri, in a succession of mornings, to two or three friends who met regularly for the purpose. He was, therefore, in all respects, well qualified to discuss any department of Italian literature to which he might direct a more especial attention. The choice he made on this occasion was fortunate; for narrative poetry is a department in which Italian genius has had eminent success, and his treatment of the subject was no less happy than the choice; especially, I think, in whatever regarded his judgments on Politian, Berni, and Bojardo.

Politian, Berni, Bojardo.

But excellent and pleasant as was the article in question, it was not satisfactory to a very respectable Italian, then living in the United States, who seems to have been more keenly sensitive to the literary honor of his country than he needed to have been. This gentleman, Signor Lorenzo Da Ponte, had been the immediate successor of Metastasio as Imperial Poet — *Poeta Cesareo* — at Vienna, and had early gained much reputation by writing to "Don Giovanni" the *libretto* which Mozart's music has carried all over the world. But the life of the Imperial Poet had subsequently been somewhat unhappy; and, after a series of adventures and misfortunes, which he has pleasantly recorded in an autobiography published in 1823, at New York, he had become a teacher of his native language in that metropolis, where he was deservedly much regarded and respected.

Daponte.

Signor Da Ponte was an earnest, — it may fairly be said, — an extravagant admirer of the literature of his native country, and could ill endure even the very cautious and inconsiderable qualifications which Mr. Prescott had deemed it needful to make respecting some of its claims in a review otherwise overflowing with admiration for Italy and Italian culture. In this Signor Da Ponte was no doubt unreasonable, but he had

not the ſmalleſt ſuſpicion that he was ſo; and in the fervor of his enthuſiaſm he ſoon publiſhed an anſwer to the review. It was, quaintly enough, appended to an Italian tranſlation, which he was then editing, of the firſt part of Dodſley's "Economy of Human Life," and fills nearly fifty pages.[2]

Anſwer to Preſcott.

As a matter almoſt of courſe, an anſwer followed, which appeared in the "North American Review" for July, 1825, and is reprinted in the "Miſcellaneous Works." It treats Signor Da Ponte with much reſpect, and even kindneſs; but, ſo far as it is controverſial in its character, its tone is firm and its ſucceſs complete. No reply, I believe, was attempted, nor is it eaſy to ſee how one could have been made. The whole affair, in fact, is now chiefly intereſting from the circumſtance that it is the only literary controverſy, and indeed I may ſay, the only controverſy of any kind, in which Mr. Preſcott was ever engaged, and which, though all ſuch diſcuſſion was foreign from his diſpoſition and temperament, and although he was then young, he managed with no little ſkill and deciſion.

Preſcott's rejoinder.

In the ſame volume is another review of Italian Literature, publiſhed ſix years later, 1831, on the "Poetry and Romance of the Italians." The curious, who look into it with care, may perhaps notice ſome repetition of the opinions expreſſed in the two preceding articles. This is owing to the circumſtance that it was not prepared for the journal in which it originally appeared, and in which the others were firſt publiſhed. It was written, as I well remember, in the winter of 1827–8, for a leading Engliſh periodical, and was gladly accepted by its ſcholar-like editor, who in a note requeſted the

Italian poetry and romance.

[2] The title-page is, "Economia della Vita Humana, tradotta dal Ingleſe da L. Giudelli, reſa alla ſua vera lezione da L. Da Ponte, con una traduzione del medeſimo in verſo rimato della Settima Parte, che ha per titolo La Religione, *con varie lettere dei ſuoi allievi.* E con alcune oſſervazioni ſull' articolo quarto, pubblicato nel *North American Review* il meſe d'Ottobre 1824, *ed altre Proſe e Poeſie.*" Nuova Yorka, 1825 (16mo., pp. 141). This groteſquely compounded little volume is now become ſo rare, that, except for the kindneſs of Mr. Henry T. Tuckerman, who found it only after long ſearch, I ſhould probably now have been unable to obtain the uſe of a copy of it. I, however, recollect receiving one from the author when it firſt appeared, and the circumſtances attending and following its publication.

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author to indicate to him the subjects on which he might be willing to furnish other articles, in case he should indulge himself further in the same style of writing. But, as the author did not give permission to send his article to the press until he should know the sort of editorial judgment passed on it, it happened that, by a series of accidents, it was so long before he heard of its acceptance, that, getting wearied with waiting, he sent for the paper back from London, and gave it to the "North American Review." Mr. Prescott adverts to these coincidences of opinion in a note to the article itself, as reprinted in the "Miscellanies," but does not explain the reason for them.

Delay of publishing.

The other articles in the same volume are generally of not less interest and value than the three already noticed. Some of them are of more. There is, for instance, a pleasant "Life of Charles Brockden Brown," our American novelist, in which, perhaps, his merits are overstated. At least, the author afterwards thought so himself; but the task was voluntarily undertaken as a contribution to the collection of biographies by his friend Mr. Sparks, in 1834, and he felt that it would be somewhat ungracious to say, under such circumstances, all he might otherwise have deemed becoming. No doubt, too, he thought that Brown, who died in 1810, and was the best of the pioneers in romantic fiction on this side of the Atlantic, had a claim to tenderness of treatment, both from the difficult circumstances in which he had been placed, and from the infirmities which had carried him to an early grave. It should, however, be understood, while making these qualifications, that the Life itself is written with freedom and spirit, and shows how well its author was fitted for such critical discussions.

Charles Brockden Brown.

Another article, which interested him more, is on the condition of those who suffer from the calamity which constituted the great trial of his own life, and on the alleviations which public benevolence could afford to their misfortunes. I refer, of course, to the blind.

In 1829, by the exertions mainly of the late excellent Dr.

Dr. John D. Fiſher.

John D. Fiſher, an "Aſylum for the Blind," now known as "The Perkins Inſtitution," was eſtabliſhed in Boſton, — the earlieſt of ſuch beneficent inſtitutions that have proved ſucceſsful in the United States, and now one of the moſt advanced in the world. It at once attracted Mr. Preſcott's attention, and from its firſt organization, in 1830, he was one of its truſtees, and among its moſt efficient friends and ſupporters.[3]

He began his active ſervices by a paper publiſhed in the "North American Review" in July, 1830, explaining the nature of ſuch aſylums, and urging the claims of the one in which he was intereſted. His earneſtneſs was not without fruits; and the inſtitution which he helped with all his heart to found is the ſame in which, under the ſingularly ſucceſsful leading of Dr. Samuel G. Howe, a ſyſtem has been deviſed for printing books ſo as to enable the blind to read with an eaſe before deemed unattainable, and is the ſame inſtitution in which, under the ſame leading, the marvel has been accompliſhed of giving much intellectual culture to Laura Bridgman, who, wholly without either ſight or hearing, has hardly more than the ſenſe of touch as an inlet to knowledge. Mr. Preſcott's ſympathy for ſuch an inſtitution, ſo founded, ſo managed, was neceſſarily ſtrong, and he continued to ſerve it with fidelity and zeal as a truſtee for ten years, when, its ſucceſs being aſſured, and other duties claiming his time and thoughts more urgently, he reſigned his place.

Dr. Samuel G. Howe.

Laura Bridgman.

Some parts of the article originally publiſhed in the "North American Review," in order to give to the Boſton Aſylum for the Blind its proper poſition before the public, are ſo obviouſly the reſult of his perſonal experience, that they ſhould be remembered as expreſſions of his perſonal character. Thus,

[3] A ſubſtantial foundation for this excellent charity was laid ſomewhat later by Colonel Thomas H. Perkins, ſo well known for his munificence to many of our public inſtitutions. He gave to it an eſtate in Pearl Street, valued at thirty thouſand dollars, on condition that an equal ſum ſhould be raiſed by ſubſcription from the community. This was done; and the inſtitution bears in conſequence his honored name. In the arrangements for this purpoſe Mr. Preſcott took much intereſt, and bore an important part, not only as a truſtee of the "Aſylum," but as a perſonal friend of Colonel Perkins.

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in the midſt of ſtriking reflections and illuſtrations connected with his general ſubject, he ſays: —

Concentrated attention of the blind.

The blind, from the cheerful ways of men cut off, are neceſſarily excluded from the buſy theatre of human action. Their infirmity, however, which conſigns them to darkneſs, and often to ſolitude, would ſeem favorable to contemplative habits, and the purſuits of abſtract ſcience and pure ſpeculation. Undiſturbed by external objects, the mind neceſſarily turns within, and concentrates its ideas on any point of inveſtigation with greater intenſity and perſeverance. It is no uncommon thing, therefore, to find perſons ſitting apart in the ſilent hours of evening for the purpoſe of compoſition, or other purely intellectual exerciſe. Malebranche, when he wiſhed to think intenſely, uſed to cloſe his ſhutters in the daytime, excluding every ray of light; and hence Democritus is ſaid to have put out his eyes in order that he might philoſophize the better; a ſtory, the veracity[4] of which Cicero, who relates it, is prudent enough not to vouch for.

Improves memory.

Blindneſs muſt alſo be exceedingly favorable to the diſcipline of the memory. Whoever has had the misfortune, from any derangement of that organ, to be compelled to derive his knowledge of books leſs from the eye than the ear, will feel the truth of this. The difficulty of recalling what has once eſcaped, of reverting to or dwelling on the paſſages read aloud by another, compels the hearer to give undivided attention to the ſubject, and to impreſs it more forcibly on his own mind by ſubſequent and methodical reflection. Inſtances of the cultivation of this faculty to an extraordinary extent have been witneſſed among the blind. [5]

And, near the end of the article, he ſays, in a noble tone, evidently conſcious of its application to himſelf: —

Power from blindneſs.

There is no higher evidence of the worth of the human mind, than its capacity of drawing conſolation from its own reſources under ſo heavy a privation, ſo that it not only can exhibit reſignation and cheerfulneſs, but energy to burſt the fetters with which it is encumbered.[6]

Theſe words, it ſhould be remembered, were written at the moment when their author was juſt ſtretching forth his hand, not without much anxiety, to begin the compoſition of his

[4] Addiſon ſo uſes the word, and I ſuppoſe his authority is ſufficient. But *veracity* is ſtrictly applicable only to a perſon, and not to a ſtatement of facts.

[5] Critical and Hiſtorical Eſſays, London, 1850, pp. 40, 41.

[6] Ibid., p. 59. There are alſo ſome ſtriking remarks, in the ſame tone, and almoſt equally applicable to himſelf, in his notice of Sir Walter Scott's power to reſiſt pain and diſeaſe, with the diſcouragements that neceſſarily accompany them. Ibid., pp. 144, 145.

"Ferdinand and Iſabella," of which the world knew nothing and ſuſpected nothing for nearly ten years. But the words, which had little meaning to others at that time, are inſtinct with the ſpirit which in ſilence and darkneſs animated him to his bold undertaking, and not only carried him through it, but gave to the reſt of his life its direction and character.[7]

Scottiſh popular poetry.

The other articles in this volume, publiſhed in 1845, leſs need to be conſidered. One is a ſhort diſcuſſion on Scottiſh popular poetry, written as early as the winter of 1825–6, and publiſhed in the following ſummer, when he was already buſy with the ſtudy of Spaniſh, and therefore naturally compared the ballads of the two countries.[8]

Molière.

Another is on Molière, dating from 1828, and was the cauſe of directing his thoughts, ten years later, while he was uncertain about his ſucceſs as an hiſtorian, to inquiries into the life of that great poet.[9]

Cervantes.

A third is on Cervantes, and was written as an amuſement in 1837, immediately after the "Ferdinand and Iſabella" was completed, and before it was publiſhed.

Scott.

And a fourth and fifth, on Lockhart's Life of Scott and on Chateaubriand, followed ſoon afterwards, before he had been able to ſettle himſelf down to regular work on his "Conqueſt of Mexico."

A few others he wrote, in part at leaſt, from regard for the authors of the books to which they relate. Such were a notice of Irving's "Conqueſt of Granada";[10]

Irving.

a review of the third volume of Bancroft's "Hiſtory of the United States";

Madame Calderon.

one of Madame Calderon's very agreeable "Travels in Mexico," which he had already uſhered into the world with a Preface;

Hiſtory of Spaniſh Literature.

and one on my own "Hiſtory of Spaniſh Literature." This laſt, which was publiſhed in January, 1850, and which, therefore, is not included in the earlieſt edition of the "Miſcella-

7 I think he took pleaſure, for the ſame reaſon, in recording (Article on Molière) that "a gentleman dined at the ſame table with Corneille for ſix months, without ſuſpecting the author of the Cid."

8 Critical Eſſays, pp. 55 ſqq.

9 Ibid., pp. 247 ſqq.

10 It may be worth notice here, that, in the opening of this review, written in 1829, Mr. Preſcott diſcuſſes the qualifications demanded of an hiſtorian, and the merits of ſome of the principal writers in this department of literature.

nies," was the only review he had written for seven years. His record in relation to it is striking: —

October 25th, 1849. — Leave Pepperell to-morrow; a very pleasant autumn and a busy one. Have read for and written an article in the "North American Review" on my friend Ticknor's great work; my last effort in the critical line, amounting to forty-nine sheets, octograph! The writing began the 12th, and ended the 21st of the month; not bad as to industry. No matter how often I have reviewed the ground, I must still review it again whenever I am to write, — when I sit down to the task.[11] Now, Muse of History, never more will I desert thy altar! Yet I shall have but little incense to offer.

This promise to himself was faithfully kept. He never wrote another article for a review.

Why he wrote reviews.

In this, I do not doubt, he was right. He began, when he was quite young, immediately after the failure of the "Club-Room," and wrote reviews upon literary subjects of consequence, as an exercise well fitted to the general course of studies he had undertaken, and as tending directly to the results he hoped at last to reach. It was, he thought, a healthy and pleasant excitement to literary activity, and an obvious means of forming and testing his style. For twelve years, therefore, beginning in 1821, he contributed annually an article to the "North American Review." At one time he thought of writing occasionally, from the same motives, for the more eminent English periodicals; but from this he was diverted partly by accident, but chiefly by labors more important and pressing. Indeed, from 1833, when he was in the midst of his "Ferdinand and Isabella," to 1837, when its composition was completed, he found no time for such lighter occupations; and, during the last six and twenty years of his life, his contributions were only eight, nearly all of which were undertaken from motives different from those that had prompted his earlier efforts. As far as he himself was concerned, review-writing had done its work, and he was better employed.[12]

[11] This is among the many proofs of his conscientious care in writing. He had read my manuscript, and had made ample notes on it; but still, lest he should make mistakes, he preferred to go over the printed book, now that he was to review it.

[12] Even before the publication of the "Ferdinand and Isabella" he had begun

Why he gave up writing them.

But, beſides his own engroſſing occupations, he had another reaſon for abandoning the habit of criticiſing the works of others. He had come to the concluſion that this form of literary labor is all but worthleſs. In his review of the Life of Scott, he had noticed how little of principle is mingled with it, and in his memoranda five years later, when his own experiences of it had become abundant, he ſays: "Criticiſm has got to be an old ſtory. It is impoſſible for one who has done that ſort of work himſelf to have any reſpect for it. How can one critic look another in the face without laughing?" He therefore gave it up, believing neither in its fairneſs, nor in its beneficial effect on authors or readers. Sir James Mackintoſh, after long experience of the ſame ſort, came to the concluſion that review-writing was a waſte of time, and adviſed Mr. Tytler, the hiſtorian, who had occaſionally ſent an article to the "Edinburgh," to abandon the practice;[13] and in the ſame

Sir James Mackintoſh.

Tytler.

to ſee the little value of American Reviews. This is plain from the following extract from a letter diſcovered ſince this memoir was finiſhed, and dated October 4, 1837. It was addreſſed from Pepperell by Mr. Preſcott to his friend, Mr. Gardiner, in Boſton.

"The laſt number of the 'North American' has found its way into our woods. I have only glanced at it, but it looks uncommonly weak and wateriſh. The review of Miſs Martineau, which is meant to be double-ſpiced, is no exception. I don't know how it is; but our critics, though not pedantic, have not the buſineſs-like air, or the air of the man of the world, which gives manlineſs and ſignificance to criticiſm. Their ſatire, when they attempt it, — which cannot be often laid to their door, — has neither the fine edge of the 'Edinburgh,' nor the ſledge-hammer ſtroke of the 'Quarterly.' They twaddle out their humor as if they were afraid of its biting too hard, or elſe they deliver axioms with a ſort of ſmart, dapper conceit, like a little parſon laying down the law to his little people. I ſuppoſe the paltry price the 'North' pays (all it can bear, too, I believe) will not command the variety of contributions, and from the higheſt ſources, as with the Engliſh journals. Then, in England, there is a far greater number of men highly cultivated, — whether in public life or men of leiſure, — whoſe intimacy with affairs and with ſociety, as well as books, affords ſupplies of a high order for periodical criticiſm. For a' that, however, the old 'North' is the beſt periodical we have ever had, or, conſidering its reſources, are likely to have, for the preſent."

[13] Mr. Preſcott's articles in the "North American Review" are as follows, thoſe marked with an aſteriſk (*) conſtituting, together with the Life of Charles Brockden Brown, the volume publiſhed in London with the title of "Critical and Hiſtorical Eſſays," and in the United States with that of "Biographical and Critical Miſcellanies": —

1821. Byron's Letters on Pope.
1822. Eſſay-Writing.
1823. French and Engliſh Tragedy.

Chap. XVIII. 1845. Æt. 49. De Tocqueville.

ſpirit, De Tocqueville, writing at the end of his life, ſaid, ſomewhat triumphantly: "Je n'ai jamais fait de ma vie un article de revue." I doubt not they were all right, and that ſociety, as it advances, will more and more juſtify their judgment.

1824. Italian Narrative Poetry.*
1825. Daponte's Obſervations.*
1826. Scottiſh Song.*
1827. Novel-Writing.
1828. Molière.*
1829. Irving's Granada.*
1830. Aſylum for the Blind.*
1831. Poetry and Romance of the Italians.*
1832. Engliſh Literature of the Nineteenth Century.
1837. Cervantes.*
1838. Lockhart's Life of Scott.*
1839. Kenyon's Poems.
1839. Chateaubriand.
1841. Bancroft's United States.*
1842. Mariotti's Italy.
1843. Madame Calderon's Mexico.*
1850. Ticknor's Spaniſh Literature.*

At one period, rather early, he wrote a conſiderable number of ſhort articles for ſome of our newſpapers; and even in the latter part of his life occaſionally adopted this mode of communicating his opinions to the public. But he did not wiſh to have them remembered. "This ſort of ephemeral traſh," he ſaid, when recording his judgment of it, "had better be forgotten by me as ſoon as poſſible."

CHAPTER XIX.

1845–1848.

His Domeſtic Relations. — "Conqueſt of Peru." — Pepperell. — Letters. — Removal in Boſton. — Difficulties. — Fiftieth Birthday. — Publiſhes the "Conqueſt of Peru." — Doubts. — Succeſs. — Memoranda. — "Edinburgh Review." — Life at Pepperell. — Letter from Miſs Edgeworth.

ON the 4th of May, 1845, Mr. Preſcott made, with his own hand, what is very rare in his memoranda, a notice of his perſonal feelings and domeſtic relations. It is ſimple, touching, true; and I recollect that he read it to me a few days afterwards with the earneſt tenderneſs which had dictated it.

Domeſtic relations.

"My forty-ninth birthday," he ſays, "and my twenty-fifth wedding-day; a quarter of a century the one, and nearly half a century the other. An Engliſh notice of me laſt month ſpeaks of me as being on the ſunny ſide of thirty-five.

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Happy life.

My life *has* been pretty much on the ſunny ſide, for which I am indebted to a ſingularly fortunate poſition in life; to ineſtimable parents, who both, until a few months ſince, were preſerved to me in health of mind and body; a wife, who has ſhared my few troubles real and imaginary, and my many bleſſings, with the ſympathy of another ſelf; a cheerful temper, in ſpite of ſome drawbacks on the ſcore of health; and eaſy circumſtances, which have enabled me to conſult my own inclinations in the direction and the amount of my ſtudies. Family, friends, fortune, — theſe have furniſhed me materials for enjoyment greater and more conſtant than is granted to moſt men. Laſtly, I muſt not omit my books; the love of letters, which I have always cultivated and which has proved my ſolace — invariable ſolace — under afflictions mental and bodily, — and of both I have had my ſhare, — and which have given me the means of living for others than myſelf, — of living, I may hope, when my own generation ſhall have paſſed away. If what I have done ſhall be permitted to go down to after times, and my ſoul ſhall be permitted to mingle with thoſe of the wiſe and good of future generations, I have not lived in vain. I have many intimations that I am now getting on the ſhady ſide of the hill, and as I go down, the ſhadows will grow longer and darker. May the dear companion who has accompanied me thus far be permitted to go with me to the cloſe, 'till we ſleep together at the foot' as tranquilly as we have lived."

Happineſs in ſtudies.

Immediately after this entry occurs one entirely different, and yet not leſs characteriſtic. It relates to the early chapters of his "Conqueſt of Peru," which, it will be remembered, he had begun ſome months before, and in which he had been ſo ſadly interrupted by the death of his father.

"Conqueſt of Peru."

May 11th, 1845. Finiſhed writing — not corrected yet, from ſecretary's illneſs — Chapters I. and II. of narrative, text. On my noctograph theſe two chapters make juſt twenty-nine ſheets, which will ſcarcely come to leſs than thirty-eight pages print. But we ſhall ſee, when the copy, by which I can alone ſafely eſtimate, is made. I began compoſition Wedneſday; finiſhed Saturday noon; about three days, or more than twelve pages print *per diem*. I never did ſo much, I think, before, in the ſame time, though I have done more in a ſingle day. At this rate, I ſhould work up the "Peru" — the two volumes — in juſt about two months. Lord, deliver me! What a fruitful author I might become were I ſo felonioufly intent! *Felo de ſe*, it would be more than all others.

Rapid writing.

I have great doubts about the quality of this ſame homeſpun that has run off ſo rapidly. I never found it *ſo hard to come to the ſtarting-point. The firſt chapter was a perfectly painful taſk*, as painful as I ever performed at ſchool.[1] I ſhould not have ſcraped over it in a month, but I bound myſelf by a forfeit againſt time. Not a bad way (*Mem.*) to force things out, that might otherwiſe rot from

Forfeit.

[1] This is the firſt chapter and is on the civilization of the Incas.

ſtagnation. A good way enough for narrative, which requires only a little top-dreſſing. But for the philoſophy and all that of hiſtory, one muſt delve deeper, and I query the policy of haſte. It is among poſſibilities that I may have to rewrite ſaid firſt chapter, which is of the generalizing caſt. The ſecond, being direct narrative, was pleaſant work to me, and as good, I ſuppoſe, as the raw material will allow. It is not cloth of gold by a long ſhot! A hero that can't read! I muſt look at ſome popular ſtories of highwaymen. Pizarro.

May 18th, 1845. The two chapters required a good deal of correction; yet, on the whole, read pretty well. I now find that it only needed a little courage at the outſet to break the ice which had formed over my ideas, and the current ſet looſe runs on naturally enough. I feel a return of my old literary intereſt; am ſatisfied that this is the ſecret of contentment, of happineſs, for me; happineſs enough for any one in the paſſing [day] and the reflection. I have written this week the few notes to be hitched on here and there. They will be few and far between in this work. The Spaniſh quotations corroborative of the text muſt be more frequent. Labor the ſecret of contentment.

The ſummer of 1845 he paſſed entirely at Pepperell; the firſt he had ſo ſpent for many years. It was, on the whole, a moſt agreeable and ſalutary one. The earlieſt weeks of the ſeaſon were, indeed, ſaddened by recollections of his father, peculiarly aſſociated with everything about him on that ſpot where from his infancy their intercourſe had been more free and unbroken than it could be amidſt the buſineſs and cares of the town. The mingled feelings of pleaſure and ſadneſs which ſcenes and memories like theſe awakened are, I think, very naturally and gracefully expreſſed in a letter, addreſſed to Mrs. Ticknor, at Geneſeo, New York, where we were paſſing the ſummer for her health, in frequent intercourſe with the cultivated family of the Wadſworths, to which our friend alludes among the pleaſures of our condition. Pepperell.

Pepperell, June 19, 1845.

MY DEAR ANNA,

I took a letter out of the poſt-office laſt evening which gladdened my eyes, as I recognized the hand of a dear friend; and now take the firſt return of daylight to anſwer it, and, as you ſee, with my own hand, though this will delay it; for I cannot truſt my broken-down nags to a long heat.

I am rejoiced to hear that you are ſituated ſo much to your mind. Fine ſcenery, with the rural quiet broken only by agreeable intercourſe with two or three poliſhed families; pleaſant drives; books; the laſt novel that is good Geneſeo.

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Dyſpepſia.

Life in the country.

for anything, and, of courſe, not very new; old books, old friends, and moſt of theſe *at correſponding diſtances;* — what could one deſire more for the ſummer, except, indeed, not to be baked alive with the heat, and a ſtomach not beſet by the foul fiend Dyſpepſia, abhorred by gods and men, who has laid me on my back more than one day here? But we ſhould not croak or be ungrateful. And yet, when the horn is filled with plenty, it is apt to make the heart hard.

We lead a very rational way of life. A morning ride among theſe green lanes, never ſo green as in the merry month of June, when the whole natural world ſeems to be juſt turned out of the Creator's hand; a walk at noon, under the broad ſhades that the hands of my father prepared for me; a drive at evening, with Will or the Judge [2] officiating in the ſaddle as ſquire of dames to Miſs B—— or to Miſs C——, who happens to be on a visit here at present; the good old ſtand-by, Sir Walter, to bring up the evening. Nor muſt I omit the grateful fumes of the ſegar to help digeſtion under the ſpreading branches of the old oilnut-trees. So wags the day. "How happily the hours of Thalaba went by!" I try between-whiles to pick ſome grains of gold out of the Andes. I hope the manufacture will not turn out mere copper-waſh.

"Conqueſt of Peru."

June 20.

Another day has flitted by, and with it my wife has flitted alſo; gone to town for a cook. O the joys, the pains of houſekeeping! The "neat-handed Phyllis" who prepares our ſavory meſſes is in love, and fancies herſelf home-ſick. So here I am monarch of all I ſurvey, — a melancholy monarchy! The country never looked ſo charming to my eyes; the fields were never ſpread with a richer green; the trees never ſeemed ſo flouriſhing; the ſtreams never rolled fuller or brighter; and the mountain background fills up the landſcape more magnificently than ever. But it is all in mourning for me. How can it be otherwiſe? Is it not full of the moſt tender and ſaddening recollections? Everything here whiſpers to me of *him;* the trees that he planted; the hawthorn hedges; the fields of grain as he planned them laſt year; every occupation, — the rides, the rambles, the ſocial after-dinner talks, the evening novel, — all ſpeak to me of the friend, the father, with whom I have enjoyed them from childhood. I have good bairns, as good as fall to the lot of moſt men; a wife, whom a quarter of a century of love has made my *better* half; but the ſweet fountain of intellectual wiſdom of which I have drunk from boyhood is ſealed to me forever. One bright ſpot in life has become dark, — dark for this world, and for the future how doubtful!

Memories of his father.

I endeavor to keep everything about me as it uſed to be in the good old time.

Old home.

[2] It was cuſtomary, in the affectionate intercourſe of Mr. Preſcott's family, to call the eldeſt ſon ſometimes Will and ſometimes "the Colonel," becauſe his great-grandfather, of Bunker Hill memory, had been a Colonel; but the youngeſt ſon, who was much of a pet, was almoſt always called "the Judge," from the office once held by his grandfather. The hiſtorian himſelf long wore the ſobriquet of "the Colonel," which Dr. Gardiner gave him in his ſchoolboy days, and it was now handed down to another generation by himſelf.

But the ſpirit which informed it all, and gave it its ſweeteſt grace, is fled. I have lead about the heart-ſtrings, ſuch as I never had there before. Yet I never loved the ſpot half ſo well.

I am glad to hear that George is drinking of the old Caſtilian fount again, ſo much at his leiſure. I dare ſay, he will get ſome good draughts at it in the quiet of Geneſeo. I ſhould like to break in on him and you ſome day. *Quien ſabe?* as they ſay in the land of the *hidalgo*. If I am obliged to take a journey, I ſhall ſet my horſes that way. But I ſhall abide here, if I can, till late in October.

Miſcellanies.

Pray tell your old gentleman, that I have had letters from the Harpers expreſſing their ſurpriſe at an advertiſement they had ſeen of a volume of "Miſcellanies, Biographical and Critical," in the London papers, and that this had led to an exchange of notes, which will terminate doubtleſs in the republication of the ſaid work here, in the ſame ſtyle with its hiſtorical predeceſſors.

Home in Bedford Street.

My mother has not been with us yet. She is conducting the great buſineſs of tranſmigration, and we get letters from her every other day. The days of the auld manſe are almoſt numbered.[3]

The children ſend love to you and Anika. Elizabeth ſays ſhe ſhall write to you ſoon. Pray remember me to your *caro ſpoſo*, and believe me always

Moſt truly and affectionately yours,

Wm. H. Prescott.

But, notwithſtanding the diſcouragements ſuggeſted in the preceding letter, his work went on well in the country. His habits were as regular as the moſt perfect control of his own time could enable him to make them, and the amount of exerciſe he took was more than uſual; for the heats of the interior, ſo much greater than anything of the ſort to which he had been accuſtomed on the ſea-coaſt, had made the aſſaults of his old enemy, the dyſpepſia, more active than ever, and had compelled him to be more than ever in the open air. He roſe, as he always did, early, and, unleſs prevented by rain, got an hour and a half in the ſaddle before breakfaſt. At noon he walked half an hour in the ſhade of his own trees, and towards evening drove an hour and a half, commonly ſtopping ſo as to lounge for a mile or two on foot in ſome favorite woodland. In this way he went through the ſummer without any very ſevere attack, and did more work than uſual.[4] One reſult of it,

Dyſpepſia.

Habits in the country.

[3] They were then removing from Bedford Street to Beacon Street, and the old houſe in Bedford Street was about to be pulled down.

[4] He records, for inſtance, that he wrote in June two chapters, one of twenty-five, and the other of twenty-ſix printed pages, in four days, adding: "I never did up ſo

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however, was, that he became more than ever enamored of his country life, and hoped that he ſhould be able to enjoy it for at leaſt ſix months in every year. But he never did. Indeed, he was never at Pepperell afterwards as long, in any one ſummer, as he was during this one.

Home in Beacon Street.

On reaching town, he eſtabliſhed himſelf at once in a houſe he had bought in Beacon Street, overlooking the fine open ground of the Mall and the old Common. The purchaſe had been made in the preceding ſpring, when, during the adjuſtment of his father's affairs, he determined on a change of reſidence, as both uſeful and pleaſant. He did not, however, leave the old houſe in Bedford Street without a natural regret. When he was making his firſt arrangements for it, he ſaid, "It will remove me from my old haunts and the ſcenes of many a happy and ſome few ſad hours. May my deſtinies be as fortunate in my new reſidence!"

Troubles of moving.

The proceſs of ſettlement in his new houſe, from which he expected no little diſcomfort, was yet more diſagreeable than he had anticipated. He called it, "a month of Pandemonium; an unfurniſhed houſe coming to order; parlors without furniture; a library without books; books without time to open them. Old faces, new faces, but not the ſweet face of Nature."

Early in December, however, the removal was complete; the library-room, which he had built, was filled with his books; a room over it was ſecured for quiet ſtudy, and his regular work was begun. The firſt entry in his memoranda after this revolution was one on the completion of a year from his father's death. "How rapidly," he ſays, "has it flitted. How ſoon will the little [remaining] ſpace be over for me and mine! His death has given me a new poſition in life, — a new way of life altogether, — and a different view of it from what I had before. I have many, many bleſſings left; family, friends, fortune. May I be ſenſible of them, and may I ſo live that I may be permitted to join *him* again in the long hereafter."

Anniverſary of his father's death.

much yarn in the ſame time. At this rate, Peru would not hold out ſix months. Can I finiſh it in a year? Alas for the reader!"

He was now in earneſt about the "Conqueſt of Peru," and determined to finiſh it by the end of December, 1846. But he found it very difficult to begin his work afreſh. He therefore, in his private memoranda, appealed to his own conſcience in every way he could, by exhortation and rebuke, ſo as to ſtimulate his flagging induſtry. He even reſorted to his old expedient of a moneyed wager. At laſt, after above a month, he ſucceeded. A little later, he was induſtrious to his heart's content, and obtained an impulſe which carried him well onward.

"Conqueſt of Peru."

Wager.

His collection of materials for the "Hiſtory of the Conqueſt of Peru" he found to be more complete even than that for the correſponding period in Mexico. The characters, too, that were to ſtand in the foreground of his ſcene, turned out more intereſting and important than he had anticipated, and ſo did the prominent points of his action and ſtory. No doubt the ſubject itſelf, conſidered as a whole, was leſs grave and grand than that of the "Conqueſt of Mexico," but it was ample enough and intereſting enough for the two volumes he had devoted to it; and, from the beginning of the year 1846, he went on his courſe with cheerfulneſs and ſpirit.

Materials for work.

Once, indeed, he was interrupted. In March he "ſtrained," as he was wont to deſcribe ſuch an acceſs of trouble, the nerve of the eye ſeverely. "Heaven knows how," he ſays, "probably by manuſcript digging; and the laſt fortnight, ever ſince March 10th, I have not read or written, in all, five minutes on my Hiſtory, nor ten minutes on anything elſe. My notes have ſince been written by ear-work; ſnail-like progreſs. I muſt not uſe my eye for reading nor writing a word again, till reſtored. When will that be? *Eheu! pazienza!*"

Strain of the eye.

It was a long time before he recovered any tolerable uſe of his ſight; — never ſuch as he had enjoyed during a large part of the time when he was preparing the "Conqueſt of Mexico." On the 4th of May, 1846, he records: —

My fiftieth birthday; a half-century! This is getting on with a vengeance. It is one of thoſe frightful halting-places in a man's life, that may make him

Fiftieth birthday.

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reflect a little. But half a century is too long a road to be looked over in half an hour; so I will defer it — till when? But what have I done the last year? Not misspent much of it. The first eleven months, from April 26th, 1845, to March 26th, 1846, I wrote five hundred and twenty pages text and notes of my "Conquest of Peru." The quantity is sufficient, and, in the summer especially, my industry was at fever-heat. But I fear I have pushed the matter indiscreetly.

Visit to Washington.

My last entry records a strain of the nerve, and my eye continued in so disabled a state that, to give it a respite and recruit my strength, I made a journey to Washington. I spent nearly a week there, and another at New York on my return, which, with a third on the road, took up three weeks. I was provided with a very agreeable fellow-traveller in my excellent friend, Charles Sumner. The excursion has done me sensible benefit, both bodily and mental. I saw much that interested me in Washington; made many acquaintances that I recollect with pleasure; and in New York I experienced the same hearty hospitality that I have always found there. . . . . I put myself under Dr. Elliott's hands, and his local applications to the eye were of considerable advantage to me. The application of these remedies, which I continue to use, has done much to restore the morbid circulation, and I have hope that, with a temperate use of the eye, I may still find it in order for going on with my literary labors. But I have symptoms of its decay not to be mistaken or disregarded. I shall not aspire to more than three hours' use of it in any day, and for the rest I must *facit per alium*.[5] This will retard my progress; but I have time enough, being only half a century old; and why should I press?

Advice of an oculist.

Bad condition of the eye.

But in these hopes he soon found himself disappointed. He with difficulty strengthened his sight so far that he was able to use his eye half an hour a day, and even this modicum soon fell back to ten minutes. He was naturally much disheartened by it. "It takes the strength out of me," he said.

But it did not take out the courage. He was abstinent from work, and careful; he used the remedies appointed; and economized his resources of all kind as well as he could. The hot weeks of the season, beginning June 25th, except a pleasant

[5] *Qui facit per alium, facit per se.* A pun made originally by Mr. T. Bigelow, a distinguished lawyer of this neighborhood, who was at one time Speaker of the House of Representatives, and otherwise much connected with the government of the Commonwealth. The pleasantry in question may be found happily recorded at p. 110 of a little volume of "Miscellanies," published in 1821, by Mr. William Tudor, a most agreeable and accomplished person, who died as our *Chargé d'Affaires* in Brazil. Mr. Bigelow, still remembered by a few of us, as he was in Mr. Tudor's time, for "his stores of humor and anecdote," was the father of Mrs. Abbott Lawrence, and the grandfather of Mr. James Lawrence, who, as elsewhere noted, married the only daughter of Mr. Prescott the historian.

excurſion to Albany, in order to be present at the marriage of Miſs Van Renſſelaer and his friend, Mr. N. Thayer, were paſſed at Nahant, and he found, as he believed, benefit to his eye, and his dyſpepſia, from the ſea-air, although it was rude in itſelf and full of rheumatiſm. He was even able, by perhaps a rather too free uſe of the active remedies given him, to read ſometimes two hours a day, though rarely more than one and a half; but he was obliged to divide this indulgence into ſeveral minute portions, and ſeparate them by conſiderable intervals of repoſe.

Visit to Albany.

The reſt of the ſeaſon, which he paſſed at Pepperell, was equally favorable to effort and induſtry. His laſt chapter — the beautiful one on the latter part of Gaſca's healing adminiſtration of the affairs of Peru, and the character of that wiſe and beneficent ſtateſman — was finiſhed in a morning's gallop through the woods, which were then, at the end of October, ſhedding their many-colored honors on his head. The laſt notes were completed a little later, November 7th, making juſt about two years and three months for the two volumes. But he ſeems to have puſhed his work ſomewhat indiſcreetly at laſt, for, when he cloſed it, the reſources of his ſight were again conſiderably diminiſhed.

Finiſhes "Conqueſt of Peru."

The compoſition of the "Conqueſt of Peru" was, therefore, finiſhed within the time he had ſet for it a year previouſly, and, the work being put to preſs without delay, the printing was completed in the latter part of March, 1847; about two years and nine months from the day when he firſt put pen to paper. It made juſt a thouſand pages, excluſive of the Appendix, and was ſtereotyped under the careful correction and ſuperviſion of his friend, Mr. Folſom, of Cambridge.

Prints it.

While it was paſſing through the preſs, or juſt as the ſtereotyping was fairly begun, he made a contract with the Meſſrs. Harper to pay for ſeven thouſand five hundred copies on the day of publication at the rate of one dollar per copy, to be ſold within two years, and to continue to publiſh at the ſame rate afterwards, or to ſurrender the contract to the author at his

Publiſhed by the Harpers, New York.

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pleaſure; terms, I ſuppoſe, more liberal than had ever been offered for a work of grave hiſtory on this ſide of the Atlantic. In London it was publiſhed by Mr. Bentley, who purchaſed the copyright for eight hundred pounds, under the kind auſpices of Colonel Aſpinwall; again a large ſum, as it was already doubtful whether an excluſive privilege could be legally maintained in Great Britain by a foreigner.

By Bentley, London.

An author rarely or never comes to the front of the ſtage and makes his bow to the public without ſome anxiety. The preſent caſe was not an exception to the general rule. Notwithſtanding the ſolid and ſettled reputation of "Ferdinand and Iſabella," and the brilliant ſucceſs of the "Conqueſt of Mexico," their author was certainly not free from miſgivings when his new argoſy was launched. He felt that his ſubject had neither the breadth and importance of the ſubjects of thoſe earlier works, nor the poetical intereſt that conſtituted ſo attractive an element in the laſt of them. About negligence in the matter of his ſtyle, too, he had ſome fears; for he had written the "Conqueſt of Peru" with a rapidity that might have been accounted remarkable in one who had the free uſe of his eyes, turning off ſometimes ſixteen printed pages in a day, and not infrequently ten or a dozen. About the ſtatement of facts he had no anxiety. He had been careful and conſcientious, as he always was; and, except for miſtakes trifling, accidental, and inevitable, honeſt criticiſm, he knew, could not approach him.

Miſgivings of the author.

But whatever might have been his feelings when the "Conqueſt of Peru" firſt came from the preſs, there was ſoon nothing of doubt mingled with them. The reviews, great and ſmall, at home and in Europe, ſpoke out at once loudly and plainly; but the public ſpoke yet louder and plainer. In five months five thouſand copies of the American edition had been ſold. At about the ſame time, an edition of half that number had been exhauſted in England. It had been republiſhed in the original in Paris, and tranſlations were going on into French, German, Spaniſh, and Dutch. A more complete ſucceſs in relation to an hiſtorical work of ſo much con-

Entire ſucceſs of the work.

sequence could, I suppose, hardly have been asked by any author, however much he might previously have been favored by the public.[6]

MEMORANDA.

"Edinburgh Review."

May 18th, 1845. — I received the "Edinburgh Review" this week. It contains an article on the "Conquest of Mexico," written with great spirit and elegance, and by far the most cordial as well as encomiastic I have ever received from a British journal; much beyond, I suspect, what the public will think I merit. It says, — Nothing in the conduct of the work they would wish otherwise, — that I unite the qualifications of the best historical writers of the day, Scott, Napier, Tytler, — is emphatic in the commendation of the style, &c., &c. I begin to have a high opinion of Reviews! The only fault they find with me is, that I deal too hardly with Cortés. Shade of Montezuma! They say, I have been blind several years! The next thing, I shall hear of a subscription set on foot for the blind Yankee author. But I have written to the editor, Napier, to set it right, if he thinks it worth while. Received also twenty columns of "newspaperial" criticisms on the "Conquest," in a succession of papers from Quebec. I am certainly the cause of some wit, and much folly, in others.

Blindness.

In relation to the mistake in the "Edinburgh Review" about his blindness, he expressed his feelings very naturally and very characteristically, when writing, immediately afterwards, to his friend, Colonel Aspinwall, London. He was too proud to submit willingly to commiseration, and too honest to accept praise for difficulties greater than he had really overcome.

"I am very much obliged to you," he wrote May 15th, 1845, "for your kind suggestion about the error in the 'Edinburgh Review' on my blindness. I have taken the hint and written myself to the editor, Mr. Napier, by this steamer. I have set him right about the matter, and he can correct it, if he thinks it worth while. I can't say I like to be called blind. I have, it is true, but one eye; but that has done me some service, and, with fair usage, will, I trust, do me some more. I have been so troubled with inflammations, that I have not been able to use it for months, and twice for several years together."

The following letter from the editor of the "Edinburgh Review" to Mr. Everett, then American Minister in London, and the subsequent memorandum of Mr. Prescott himself, show the end of this slight matter.

[6] To January 1, 1860, there had been sold of the American and English editions of the "Conquest of Peru," 16,965 copies.

FROM MACVEY NAPIER, ESQ.

Edinburgh, June 10, 1845.

DEAR SIR,

A short absence in the country has till now prevented me from acknowledging the receipt of the flattering letter of the 2d with which you have been pleased to honor me, covering a very acceptable enclosure from Mr. Prescott.

United States and England.

Thank God, there is an extensive as well as rich neutral territory of science and literature, where the two nations may, and ever ought to meet, without any of those illiberal feelings and degrading animosities which too often impart a malignant aspect to the intercourse and claims of civil life; and it has really given me high satisfaction to find, that both you and Mr. Prescott himself are satisfied that his very great merits have been kindly proclaimed in the article which I have lately had the pleasure of inserting in the "Edinburgh Review."

I hope I may request that, when you shall have any call otherwise to write to Mr. Prescott, you will convey to him the expression of my satisfaction at finding that he is pleased with the meed of honest approbation that is there awarded to him.

Blindness.

I am truly glad to learn from that gentleman himself, that the statement as to his *total* blindness, which I inserted in a note to the article, on what I thought good authority, proves to be inaccurate; and from his wish — natural to a lofty spirit — that he should not be thought to have originated or countenanced any statement as to the additional merits of historical research which so vast a bereavement would infer, I shall take an opportunity to correct my mistake; a communication which will, besides, prove most welcome to the learned world.

With respect to the authorship of the article, there needs to be no hesitation to proclaim it. With the exception of a very few editorial insertions and alterations, which do not by any means enhance its merits, it was wholly written by Mr. Charles Phillipps, — a young barrister and son of Mr. Phillipps, one of the Under-Secretaries of State for the Home-Department. He is the author of some other very valuable contributions. You are quite at liberty to mention this to Mr. Prescott.

. . . . .

I have the honor to remain, with very great esteem, dear sir,

Your obliged and faithful servant,

MACVEY NAPIER.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY E. EVERETT, LONDON.

MEMORANDUM.

August 10th, 1845. — The editor of last "Edinburgh Review" has politely inserted a note correcting the statement, in preceding number, of my blindness, on pretty good authority, — viz. myself. So I trust it will find credit.

TO DON PASCUAL DE GAYANGOS.

Pepperell, Sept. 28, 1845.

. . . . . The Gaſca manuſcript, which I believe is in the box, will be in perfect ſeaſon, as I am yet a good diſtance from that period.[7] I have been very induſtrious this ſummer, having written half a volume in theſe quiet ſhades of Pepperell. This concludes my firſt volume, of which the Introduction, about one hundred and fifty pages, took me a long while. The reſt will be eaſy ſailing enough, though I wiſh my hero was more of a gentleman and leſs of a bandit. I ſhall not make more than a brace of volumes, I am reſolved. Ford has ſent me his "Handbook of Spain." What an *olla podrida* it is! — criticiſm, travels, hiſtory, topography, &c., &c., all in one. It is a perfect treaſure in its way, and will ſave me the trouble of a voyage to Spain, if I ſhould be inclined to make it before writing "Philip." He ſpeaks of you like a gentleman, as he ought to do; and I have come better out of his hands than I did once on a time.

"Conqueſt of Peru."

Mr. Ford.

. . . . .

Have you got the copy of my "Miſcellanies" I ordered for you? You will ſee my portrait in it, which ſhows more imagination than anything elſe in the book, I believe. The great ſtaring eyes, however, will ſhow that I am not blind, — that 's ſome comfort.

The Miſcellanies.

TO DON PASCUAL DE GAYANGOS.

Boſton, Nov. 13, 1845.

. . . . . And now, my dear friend, I want to ſay a word about the manuſcripts, which I found awaiting me on my return to town. I have as yet, with the aid of my ſecretary's eyes, looked through only about half of them. They are very precious documents. The letters from San Geronimo de Yuſte have much intereſt, and ſhow that Charles the Fifth was not, as Robertſon ſuppoſed, a retired monk, who reſigned the world, and all the knowledge of it, when he reſigned his crown. I ſee mentioned in a ſtatement of the manuſcripts diſcovered by Gonzales, printed in our newspapers and written by Mr. Wheaton, our Miniſter at Berlin, that one of theſe documents was a diary kept by the Major Domo Quixada and Vaſquez de Molina, the Emperor's private ſecretary, to be tranſmitted to Doña Juana, the Princeſs of Portugal; which journal contains a minute account of his health, actions, and converſation, &c., and that the diary furniſhed one great ſource of Gonzales's information. It is now, I ſuppoſe, too late to get it, as moſt probably the ſituation of the manuſcript is not known to the clerks of the archives. Mignet told a friend of mine that he ſhould probably publiſh ſome of the moſt important documents he had got from Gonzales before long.

MSS. for Philip II.

Diaries from Yuſte.

[7] An important MS. relating to the adminiſtration of Gaſca in Peru.

CHAP. XIX. 1846. ÆT. 50.

The Armada.

I have no trouble on that ſcore, as I feel already ſtrong enough with your kind aſſiſtance. The documents relating to the Armada have extraordinary intereſt. The deſpatches of Philip are eminently characteriſtic of the man, and ſhow that nothing, great or little, was done without his ſuperviſion. We are juſt now exploring the letters of the Santa Cruz collection. But this I have done only at intervals, when I could ſnatch leiſure. In a week or two I hope to be ſettled.

TO DON PASCUAL DE GAYANGOS.

Boſton, Aug. 31, 1846.

Tranſlation of "Ferdinand and Iſabella."

. . . . . The tranſlation[8] appears faithful as far as I have compared it. As to its literary execution in other reſpects, a foreigner cannot decide. But I wiſh you would give my thanks to the tranſlator for the pleaſure it has given me. His notes on the whole are courteous, though they ſhow that Señor Sabau has contemplated the ground often, from a different point of view from myſelf. But this is natural. For am I not the child of democracy? Yet no bigoted one, I aſſure you. I am no friend to bigotry in politics or religion, and I believe that forms are not ſo important as the manner in which they are adminiſtered. The mechanical execution of the book is excellent. It gives me real pleaſure to ſee myſelf put into ſo reſpectable a dreſs in Madrid. I prize a tranſlation into the noble Caſtilian more than any other tongue. For if my volumes are worthy of tranſlation into it, it is the beſt proof that I have not waſted my time, and that I have contributed ſomething in reference to the inſtitutions and hiſtory of the country which the Spaniards themſelves would not willingly let die.

TO THE CAVALIERE EUGENIO ALBÈRI, FLORENCE.

Boſton, Oct. 13, 1846.

MY DEAR SIR,

Relazioni Venete.

I have great pleaſure in acknowledging the receipt of the ſix volumes of *Relazioni*, which you have been ſo obliging as to ſend me through Mr. Leſter.

It is a work of ineſtimable value, and furniſhes the moſt authentic baſis for hiſtory. Your method of editing it appears to me admirable. The brief but comprehenſive hiſtorical and chronological notices at the beginning, and your luminous annotations throughout, put the reader in poſſeſſion of all the information he can deſire in regard to the ſubjects treated in the *Relazioni*. At the cloſe of the third volume, on the Ottomans, you place an Index of the contents of the volume which is a great convenience.

I ſuppoſe, from what you ſay in the Preface, there will be a full Index of the whole when completed.

[8] Of "Ferdinand and Iſabella," by Sabau.

I have a number of Venetian *Relazioni* in manuſcript, copied from the libraries of Berlin and Gotha. They relate to the court of Philip the Second, on which you muſt now, I ſuppoſe, be occupied, and I ſhall look forward to the concluſion of your learned labors with the greateſt intereſt. Many of your manuſcripts, I ſee, are derived from the Marquis Gino Capponi's collection. It muſt be very rich indeed. — I am much grieved to learn that his eyes have now failed him altogether. My own privations in this way, though I have the partial uſe of my eyes, make me feel how heavy a blow it is to a ſcholar like him. It is gratifying to reflect that he bears up under it with ſo much courage, and that the misfortune does not quench his generous enthuſiaſm for letters. Pray give my ſincere reſpects and regards to him, for, though I never ſaw him, I had the pleaſure formerly of communicating with him, and I know his character ſo well that I feel as if I knew him perſonally.

Marquis Gino Capponi.

FROM MISS MARIA EDGEWORTH.

Edgeworth's Town, Aug. 28, 1847.

DEAR SIR,

Your Preface to your "Hiſtory of the Conqueſt of Peru" is moſt intereſting; eſpecially that part which concerns the author individually. That delicate integrity which made him apprehend that he had received praiſe or ſympathy from the world on falſe pretences, converts what might have been pity into admiration, without diminiſhing the feeling for his ſuffering and his privations, againſt which he has ſo nobly, ſo perſeveringly, ſo ſucceſsfully ſtruggled. Our admiration and higheſt eſteem now are commanded by his moral courage and truth.

Preface to the "Conqueſt of Peru."

What pleaſure and pride — honeſt, proper pride — you muſt feel, my dear Mr. Preſcott, in the ſenſe of difficulty conquered; of difficulties innumerable vanquiſhed by the perſeverance and fortitude of genius! It is a fine example to human nature, and will form genius to great works in the riſing generation and in ages yet unborn.

What a new and ennobling moral view of poſthumous fame! A view which ſhort-ſighted, narrow-minded mediocrity cannot reach, and probably would call romantic, but which the noble-minded realize to themſelves, and aſk not either the ſympathy or the comprehenſion of the commonplace ones. You need not apologize for ſpeaking of yourſelf to the world. No one in the world, whoſe opinion is worth looking to, will ever think or call this "egotiſm," any more than they did in the caſe of Sir Walter Scott. Whenever he ſpoke of himſelf it was with the ſame noble and engaging ſimplicity, the ſame endearing confidence in the ſympathy of the good and true-minded, and the ſame real freedom from all vanity which we ſee in your addreſſes to the public.

Poſthumous fame anticipated.

As to your judgments of the advantages peculiar to each of your Hiſtories, — the "Conqueſt of Mexico" and the "Conqueſt of Peru," — of courſe you, who have conſidered and compared them in all lights, muſt be accurate in your

CHAP. XIX.
1847.
ÆT. 51.

Difficulties of the ſubject in the "Conqueſt of Peru."

eſtimate of the facility or difficulty each ſubject preſented; and you have well pointed out in your Preface to "Peru" the difficulty of making out a unity of ſubject, — where, in fact, the *firſt* unity ends, as we may dramatically conſider it, at the third act, when the conqueſt of the Incas is effected, — but not the conqueſt of Peru for Spain, which is the thing to be done. You have admirably kept the mind's eye upon this, the real end, and have thus carried on, and prolonged, and raiſed, as you carried forward, the intereſt ſuſtained to the laſt moment happily by the noble character of Gaſca, with which terminates the hiſtory of the miſſion to Peru.

Cruelty of the Spaniards.

You ſuſtain with the dignity of a juſt hiſtorian your mottoes from Claudian and from Lope de Vega. And in doing this *con amore* you carry with you the ſympathy of your reader. The cruelties of the Spaniards to the inoffenſive, amiable, hoſpitable, truſting Peruvians and their Incas are ſo revolting, that, unleſs you had given vent to indignation, the reader's natural, irrepreſſible feelings would have turned againſt the narrator, in whom even impartiality would have been ſuſpected of want of moral ſenſe.

Political freedom.

I wiſh that you could have gone further into that compariſon or inquiry which you have touched upon and ſo ably pointed out for further inquiry, — How far the want of political freedom is compatible or incompatible with happineſs or virtue? You well obſerve, that under the Incas this experiment was tried, or was trying, upon the Peruvians, and that the contrary experiment is now trying in America. Much may be *ſaid*, but much more is to be *ſeen*, on both ſides of this queſtion. There is a good eſſay by a friend of mine, perhaps of yours, the late Abbé Morellet, upon the ſubject of *perſonal* and *political* freedom. I wonder

Negro ſlavery.

what your negroes would ſay touching the comforts of ſlavery. They ſeem to feel freedom a curſe, when ſuddenly given, and, when unprepared for the conſequences of independence, lie down with the cap of liberty pulled over their ears and go to ſleep or to death in ſome of our freed, lazy colonies and the empire of Hayti. But, I ſuppoſe, time and motives will ſettle all this, and waken ſouls in black bodies as well as in white. Meanwhile, I cannot but wiſh you had diſcuſſed a little more this queſtion, even if you had come upon the yet more

Races.

difficult queſtion of races, and their unconquerable, or their conquerable or exhauſtible differences. Who could do this ſo well?

Authorities cited.

I admire your adherence to your principle of giving evidence in your notes and appendices for your own accuracy, and allowing your own opinions to be rejudged by your readers in furniſhing them with the means of judging which they could not otherwiſe procure, and which you, having obtained with ſo much labor and ſo much favor from high and cloſed ſources, bring before us *gratis* with ſuch unoſtentatious candor and humility.

Biographical notices.

I admire and ſavor, too, your practice of mixing biography with hiſtory; genuine ſayings and letters by which the individuals give their own character and their own portraits. And I thank you for the quantity of information you give in the notices of the principal authorities to whom you refer. Theſe biographical notices add weight and value to the authorities, in the moſt agreeable manner; — though I own that I was often mortified by my own ignorance of the names you mention of great men, your familiars. — You have made

me long to have known your admirable friend, Don Fernandez de Navarrete, of whom you make ſuch honorable and touching mention in your Preface. Navarrete.

I muſt content myſelf, however, — and comfortably well I do content myſelf, — with knowing your dear friend Mr. Ticknor, whom I do eſteem and admire with all my heart, as you do.

You mention Mr. O. Rich as a bibliographer to whom you have been obliged. It occurred to me that this might be the Mr. O. Rich reſiding in London, to whom Mr. Ticknor had told me I might apply to convey packets or books to him, and, upon venturing to aſk the queſtion, Mr. Rich anſwered me in the moſt obliging manner, confirming, though with great humility, his identity, and offering to convey any packets I might wiſh to ſend to Boſton. O. Rich.

I yeſterday ſent to him a parcel to go in his next box of books to Mr. Ticknor. In it I have put, addreſſed to the care of Mr. Ticknor, a very trifling offering for you, my dear ſir, which, trifling as it is, I hope and truſt your good nature will not diſdain, — half a dozen worked *marks* to put in books; and I intended thoſe to be uſed in your books of reference when you are working, as I hope you are, or will be, at your *magnum opus*, — the Hiſtory of Spain. One of theſe marks, that which is marked in green ſilk "Maria E—— for Preſcott's works"!!! is my own handiwork every ſtitch; in my eighty-firſt year, — eighty-two almoſt, — I ſhall be eighty-two the 1ſt of January. I am proud of being able, even in this trifling matter, to join my young friends in this family in working *ſouvenirs* for the great hiſtorian. Book-marks.

Believe me, my dear Mr. Preſcott, your much obliged and highly gratified friend, and admiring reader and *marker*,

MARIA EDGEWORTH.

TO DON PASCUAL DE GAYANGOS. 1848.

Boſton, Jan. 27, 1848.

. . . . . I have been overhauling my Philip the Second treaſures, and making out a catalogue of them. It is as beautiful a collection, printed and manuſcript, I will venture to ſay, as hiſtory-monger ever had on his ſhelves. How much am I indebted to you! There are too many of your own books in it, however, by half, and you muſt not fail to adviſe me when you want any or all of them, which I can eaſily underſtand may be the caſe at any time. Materials for Philip II.

FROM M. AUGUSTIN THIERRY.

MONSIEUR,

Pardonnez moi le long retard que j'ai mis à vous remercier du précieux envoi que vous avez eu la bonté de me faire; la lenteur de mes lectures d'aveugle, Thanks.

ſurtoût en langue étrangère, le peu de loiſir que me laiſſe le triſte état de ma ſanté et des travaux impérieux auxquels j'ai peine à ſuffire, voilà quelles ont été les cauſes de ma négligence apparente à remplir un devoir de gratitude et de haute eſtime pour vous. Je voulais avoir complètement lu vos deux nouveaux et très remarquables volumes. Je trouve que, pour le fond, pour les recherches, la netteté et la juſteſſe des vues, ils ſont égaux à vos précédentes publications, et que peut-être ils les ſurpaſſent pour la forme. Le ſtyle eſt ſobre et ferme, l'expoſition nette et la partie dramatique de l'hiſtoire vivement traitée. Pourſuivez, Monſieur, des travaux dont le ſuccès égale le mérite, et qui ont rendu votre nom illuſtre de ce côté-ci de l'Atlantique; donnez leur toute l'étendue que vos projets comportaient, et ne vous laiſſez pas décourager par la menace d'un mal qui, — j'en ai fait l'expérience, — eſt, dans la carrière d'hiſtorien, une gêne, un embarras, mais nullement un obſtacle.

Mode of work.

Vous me demandez ſi la néceſſité, mère de toute induſtrie, ne m'a pas ſuggéré quelques méthodes particulières, qui atténuent pour moi les difficultés du travail d'aveugle. Je ſuis forcé d'avouer que je n'ai rien d'intéreſſant à vous dire. Ma façon de travailler eſt la même qu'au tems où j'avais l'uſage de mes yeux, ſi ce n'eſt que je dicte et me fais lire; je me fais lire tous les matériaux que j'emploie, car je ne m'en rapporte qu'à moi-même pour l'exactitude des recherches et le choix des notes. Il réſulte de là une certaine perte de temps. Le travail eſt long, mais voilà tout; je marche lentement mais je marche. Il n'y a qu'un moment difficile, c'eſt le paſſage ſubit de l'écriture manuelle à la dictée; quand une fois ce point eſt gagné, on ne trouve plus de véritables épines. Peut-être, Monſieur, avez vous déjà l'habitude de dicter à un ſecrétaire; ſi cela eſt, mettez vous à la faire excluſivement, et ne vous inquiétez pas du reſte. En quelques ſemaines vous deviendrez ce que je ſuis moi-même, auſſi calme, auſſi préſent d'eſprit pour tous les détails du ſtyle que ſi je travaillais avec mes yeux, la plume à la main. Ce n'eſt pas au point où vous êtes parvenu qu'on s'arrête; vous avez éprouvé vos forces; elles ne vous manqueront pas; et le ſuccès eſt certain pour tout ce que vous tenterez déſormais. Je ſuivrai de loin vos travaux avec la ſympathie d'un ami de votre gloire; croyez le, Monſieur, et agréez avec mes remerciments les plus vifs, l'aſſurance de mes ſentiments d'affection et d'admiration.

P. AUGUSTIN THIERRY.

22 Fevrier, 1848

FROM MR. HALLAM.

Wilton Creſcent, London, July 18, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

I hope that you will receive with this letter, or at leaſt very ſoon afterwards, a volume which I have intruſted to the care of our friend, Mr. Bancroft.[9] It contains only the gleanings of the harveſt, and I can hardly find a ſufficiently

9 Then Miniſter of the United States in London.

modeſt name for it. After thirty years I found more to add, and, I muſt ſay, more to correct, in my work on the "Middle Ages," than could well be brought into the foot-notes of a new edition. I have conſequently produced, under the title "Supplemental Notes," almoſt a new volume, but referring throughout to the original work, ſo that it cannot be of any utility to thoſe who do not compare the two. This is, perhaps, rather a clumſy kind of compoſition, and I am far from expecting much reputation by it: but I really hope that it may be uſeful to the readers of the former volumes. A great deal required expanſion and illuſtration, beſides what I muſt in penitence confeſs to be the overſights and errors of the work itſelf. I have great pleaſure, however, in ſending copies to my friends, both here and what few I poſſeſs in the United States; and among them I am proud to rank your name, ſeparated as we are by the Atlantic barrier, which at my age it would be too adventurous to paſs. Rumors have from time to time reached me, that, notwithſtanding the ſevere viſitation of Providence under which you labor, you have contemplated yourſelf ſo arduous a voyage. May you have health and ſpirits to accompliſh it, while I yet remain on earth! But I have yeſterday entered my ſeventy-ſecond year.

Notes to his "Middle Ages."

Hopes Mr. Preſcott will come to England.

I will not ſpeak of the condition of Europe. You have been converſant with the hiſtory of great and rapid revolutions; but nothing in the paſt annals of mankind can be ſet by the ſide of the laſt months. We rejoice in trembling, that God has hitherto ſpared this nation; but the principles of diſintegration, which France and Germany are ſo terribly ſuffering under, cannot but be at work among us.

State of Europe.

I truſt that you are proceeding as rapidly as circumſtances will permit with your fourth great Hiſtory, that of Philip the Second. It always appears marvellous to me, how you achieve ſo much under ſo many impediments.

Philip II.

Believe me, my dear ſir,

Moſt faithfully yours,

HENRY HALLAM.

TO MRS. LYELL.

Nahant, Fitful Head, Aug. 5, 1848.

. . . . . We are paſſing our ſummer in our rocky eyrie at Nahant, taking in the cool breezes that blow over the waters, whoſe ſpray is daſhing up inceſſantly under my window. I am idly-buſy with looking over my Philip the Second collection, like one who looks into the dark gulf, into which he is afraid to plunge. Had I half an eye in my head, I ſhould not "ſtand ſhivering on the brink" ſo long. The Ticknors are at a very pleaſant place on the coaſt, ſome twenty miles off, at Mancheſter. I hear from them conſtantly, but ſee them rarely.

Philip II.

. . . . .

FROM THE EARL OF CARLISLE.

London, Nov. 18, 1848.

MY DEAR PRESCOTT,

I sadly fear that, if a strict investigation of my last date took place, it would be found that I had lagged behind the yearly bargain; and I fear I am the delinquent. I will honestly own why I put off writing for some time; I wished to have read your "Peru" before I did so, and to tell you what I thought of it. I will carry my honesty further, and intrepidly avow, that I still labor under the same disqualification, though in fact this is both my shame and my merit, for I am very sure it would have been a far more agreeable and delightful occupation to me than the many tedious, harassing shreds of business which engross and rule all my hours. I can as honestly tell you, that I have heard very high and most concurrent praise of it, and there are many who prefer it to "Mexico." I wonder what you are engaged upon now; is it the ancient project of "Philip the Second"?

"Conquest of Peru."

State of Europe.

Europe is in the meanwhile acting history faster than you can write it. The web becomes more inextricable every day, and the tissues do not wear lighter hues. I think our two Saxon families present very gratifying contrasts, on the whole, to all this fearful pother.

Death of Lord Carlisle.

You will probably be aware, that my thoughts and feelings must have of late been mainly concentrated upon a domestic bereavement,[10] and, at the end of my letter, you will read a new name. After my long silence, I was really anxious to take a very early opportunity of assuring you that it inherits and hopes to perpetuate all the esteem and affection for you that were acquired under the old one. My dear friend, absence and distance only rivet on my spirit the delight of claiming communion with such a one as yours; for I am sure it is still as bright, gentle, and high-toned, as when I first gave myself to its spell.

. . . . . .

I must not write to his brother-historian without mentioning that Macaulay tells me the two first volumes of his History will be out in less than a fortnight. Tell Sumner how unchangedly I feel towards him, though, I fear, I have been equally guilty to him.

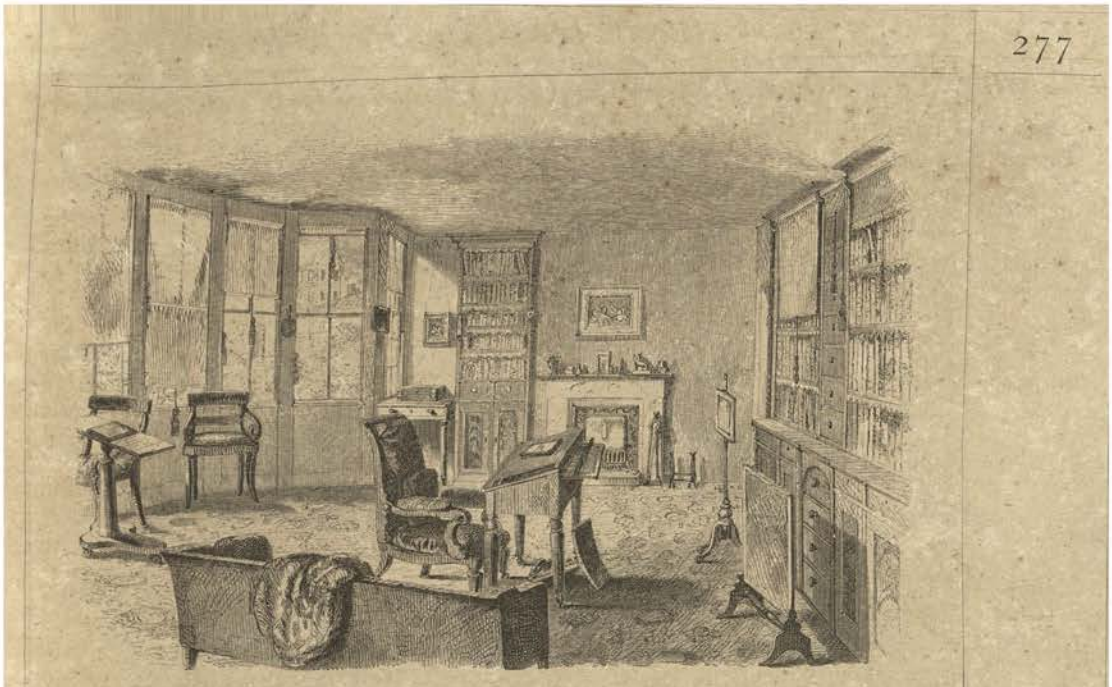
Does Mrs. Ticknor still remember me?

Ever, my dear Prescott,

Affectionately yours,

CARLISLE.

[10] The death of his father, sixth Earl of Carlisle.



CHAPTER XX.

1848.

Mr. Motley. — Hesitation about beginning the History of Philip II. — State of his Sight bad. — Preparations. — Doubts about taking the whole Subject. — Memoir of Pickering. — Early Intimations of a Life of Philip II. — Collection of Materials for it. — Difficulty of getting them. — Greatly assisted by Don Pascual de Gayangos. — Materials at last ample. — Prints for his own Use a Portion of Ranke's Spanish Empire.

SOMEWHAT earlier than the period at which we are now arrived, — in fact, before the "Conquest of Peru" was published, — an interesting circumstance occurred connected immediately with the "History of Philip the Second," which Mr. Prescott was at this time just about to undertake in earnest, and for which he had been making arrangements and preparations many years. I refer to the fact, now

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Mr. J. L. Motley.

well known, that Mr. J. Lothrop Motley, who has since gained so much honor for himself and for his country as an historian, was — in ignorance of Mr. Prescott's purposes — already occupied with a kindred subject.[1] The moment, therefore, that he was aware of this condition of things and the consequent possibility that there might be an untoward interference in their plans, he took the same frank and honorable course with Mr. Prescott, that Mr. Prescott had taken in relation to Mr. Irving, when he found that they had both been contemplating a "History of the Conquest of Mexico." The result was the same. Mr. Prescott, instead of treating the matter as an interference, earnestly encouraged Mr. Motley to go on, and placed at his disposition such of the books in his library as could be useful to him. How amply and promptly he did it, Mr. Motley's own account will best show. It is in a letter, dated at Rome, 26th February, 1859, — the day he heard of Mr. Prescott's death, — and was addressed to his intimate friend, Mr. William Amory, of Boston, Mr. Prescott's much loved brother-in-law.

Mr. Motley's notice of Mr. Prescott's "Philip the Second."

It seems to me but as yesterday, though it must be now twelve years ago, that I was talking with our ever-lamented friend Stackpole[2] about my intention of writing a history upon a subject to which I have since that time been devoting myself. I had then made already some general studies in reference to it, without being in the least aware that Prescott had the intention of writing the "History of Philip the Second." Stackpole had heard the fact, and that large preparations had already been made for the work, although "Peru" had not yet been published. I felt naturally much disappointed. I was conscious of the immense disadvantage to myself of making my appearance, probably at the same time, before the public, with a work, not at all similar in plan to Philip the Second, but which must, of necessity, traverse a portion of the same ground.

His anxiety.

My first thought was inevitably, as it were, only of myself. It seemed to me that I had nothing to do, but to abandon at once a cherished dream, and probably to renounce authorship. For I had not first made up my mind to write a history, and then cast about to take up a subject. My subject had taken me up, drawn me on, and absorbed me into itself. It was necessary for me, it seemed, to write the book I had been thinking much of, even if it were destined to fall dead from the press, and I had no inclination or interest to write any other. When I had

[1] "The Rise of the Dutch Republic," not published until 1856.

[2] Mr. J. L. Stackpole, a gentleman of much cultivation, and a kinsman of Mr. Motley by marriage, was suddenly killed by a railroad accident in 1847.

made up my mind accordingly, it then occurred to me that Preſcott might not be pleaſed that I ſhould come forward upon his ground. It is true, that no announcement of his intentions had been made, and that he had not, I believe, even commenced his preliminary ſtudies for Philip. At the ſame time, I thought it would be diſloyal on my part not to go to him at once, confer with him on the ſubject, and, if I ſhould find a ſhadow of diſſatisfaction on his mind at my propoſition, to abandon my plan altogether.

Viſit to Mr. Preſcott.

I had only the ſlighteſt acquaintance with him at that time. I was comparatively a young man, and certainly not entitled, on any ground, to more than the common courteſy which Preſcott never could refuſe to any one. But he received me with ſuch a frank and ready and liberal ſympathy, and ſuch an open-hearted, guileleſs expanſiveneſs, that I felt a perſonal affection for him from that hour. I remember the interview as if it had taken place yeſterday. It was in his father's houſe, in his own library, looking on the garden. Houſe and garden, honored father and illuſtrious ſon, — alas! all numbered with the things that were! He aſſured me that he had not the ſlighteſt objection whatever to my plan, that he wiſhed me every ſucceſs, and that, if there were any books in his library bearing on my ſubject that I liked to uſe, they were entirely at my ſervice. After I had expreſſed my gratitude for his kindneſs and cordiality, by which I had been, in a very few moments, ſet completely at eaſe, — ſo far as my fears of his diſapprobation went, — I alſo, very naturally, ſtated my opinion, that the danger was entirely mine, and that it was rather wilful of me thus to riſk ſuch a colliſion at my firſt venture, the probable conſequence of which was utter ſhipwreck. I recollect how kindly and warmly he combated this opinion, aſſuring me that no two books, as he ſaid, ever injured each other, and encouraging me in the warmeſt and moſt earneſt manner to proceed on the courſe I had marked out for myſelf.

Mr. Preſcott's kindneſs.

Had the reſult of that interview been different, — had he diſtinctly ſtated, or even vaguely hinted, that it would be as well if I ſhould ſelect ſome other topic, or had he only ſprinkled me with the cold water of conventional and commonplace encouragement, — I ſhould have gone from him with a chill upon my mind, and, no doubt, have laid down the pen at once; for, as I have already ſaid, it was not that I cared about writing *a* hiſtory, but that I felt an inevitable impulſe to write *one particular hiſtory*.

Mr. Motley's gratification.

You know how kindly he always ſpoke of and to me; and the generous manner in which, without the ſlighteſt hint from me, and entirely unexpected by me, he attracted the eyes of his hoſts of readers to my forthcoming work, by ſo handſomely alluding to it in the Preface to his own, muſt be almoſt as freſh in your memory as it is in mine.

And, although it ſeems eaſy enough for a man of world-wide reputation thus to extend the right hand of fellowſhip to an unknown and ſtruggling aſpirant, yet I fear that the hiſtory of literature will ſhow that ſuch inſtances of diſintereſted kindneſs are as rare as they are noble.[3]

[3] The whole of this ſtriking letter is to be found in the Proceedings of the Maſſachuſetts Hiſtorical Society for 1858, 1859, pp. 266–271. It is a true and

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Mr. Prescott's manuscripts.

To this frank and interesting statement I can add, that Mr. Prescott told it all to me at the time, and then asked me whether I would not advise him to offer Mr. Motley the use of his *manuscript* collections for "Philip the Second," as he had already offered that of his *printed books*. I told him, that I thought Mr. Motley would hardly be willing to accept such an offer; and, besides, that, if there were anything peculiarly his own, and which he should feel bound to reserve, as giving especial authority and value to his History, it must be the materials he had, at so much pains and cost, collected from the great archives and libraries all over Europe. The idea, I confess, struck me as somewhat extravagant, and no doubt he would have felt pain in giving away personal advantages so obvious, so great, and so hardly earned; but, from the goodness of his nature, I have no doubt that he was capable of the sacrifice.

In due time, as we have seen, the "Conquest of Peru" was published; and Mr. Prescott naturally turned to the next great work he was to undertake, and which had been ten years, at least, among his well-digested plans for the future.

His position.

His position for such an undertaking was, in many respects, fortunate. The state of his eyes indeed was bad, and his general health seemed a little shaken. But he was only fifty-two years old; his spirits and courage were as high as they had been in his youth; his practice as a writer and his experience of the peculiar difficulties he had to encounter were as great as they well could be; and, above all, success had set a seal on his previous brilliant efforts which seemed to make the future sure.

Still he paused. The last sheets of the "Conquest of Peru" were corrected for the press, and the work was therefore entirely off his hands, in March, 1847; as, in fact, it had been substantially since the preceding October. But in March,

touching tribute to Mr. Prescott's personal character and intellectual eminence, the more to be valued, since, in 1860, Mr. Motley was elected to the place left vacant in the French Institute by Mr. Prescott's death, — an honor *not only fit in itself*, but peculiarly appropriate, since it preserves the succession of Spanish historians in the same chair unbroken, from the time of Navarrete's election, half a century earlier.

1848, he could not be ſaid to have begun in earneſt, his ſtudies for the reign of Philip the Second. This long heſitation was owing in part to the reluctance that always held him back from entering promptly on any new field of labor, and partly to the condition of his ſight.

He pauſes in his work.

The laſt, in fact, had now become a ſubject of ſuch ſerious conſideration and anxiety, as he had not felt for many years. The power of uſing his eye — his only eye, it ſhould always be remembered — had been gradually reduced again, until it did not exceed one hour a day, and that divided into two portions, at conſiderable intervals from each other. On examination, the retina was found to be affected anew, and incipient *amauroſis*, or decay of the nerve, was announced. Hopes were held out by an oculiſt who viſited Boſton at this period, and whom Mr. Preſcott conſulted for the firſt time, that relief more or leſs conſiderable might ſtill be found in the reſources of the healing art, and that he might yet be enabled to proſecute his labors as well as he had done. But he could not accept theſe hopes, much as he deſired to. He knew that for thirty-four years one eye had been compelled to do the work of two, and that the labor thus thrown upon the ſingle organ — however carefully he had managed and ſpared it — had been more than it could bear. He felt that its powers were decaying; in ſome degree, no doubt, from advancing years, but more from overwork, which yet could not be avoided without abandoning the main hopes of his literary life. He therefore reſorted for counſel to phyſicians of eminence, who were his friends, but who were not profeſſed oculiſts, and laid his caſe before them. It was not new to them. They had known it already in moſt of its aſpects, but they now gave to it again their moſt careful conſideration. The reſult of their judgment coincided with his own previouſly formed opinion; and, under their advice, he deliberately made up his mind, as he has recorded it, "to relinquiſh *all* uſe of the eye for the future in his ſtudies, and to be content if he could preſerve it for the more vulgar purpoſes of life."

Bad ſtate of his ſight.

Conſultation about it.

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Decision.

It was a hard decision. I am not certain that he made it without a lingering hope, such as we are all apt to indulge, even in our darkest moments, concerning whatever regards health and life; — a hope, I mean, that there might still be a revival of power in the decayed organ, and that it might still serve him, in some degree, as it had done, if not to the same extent. But if he had such a hope, he was careful not to foster it or rely on it. His record on this point is striking and decisive.

Thus was I in a similar situation with that in which I found myself on beginning the "History of Ferdinand and Isabella"; — with this important difference. Then I had hopes to cheer me on; the hope of future improvement, as the trouble then arose from an excessive sensibility of the nerve. But this hope has now left me, and forever. And whatever plans I am to make of future study must be formed on the same calculations as those of a blind man.

Discouragement.

As this desponding conviction pressed on me, it is no wonder that I should have paused and greatly hesitated before involving myself in the labyrinth of researches relating to one of the most busy, comprehensive, and prolific periods of European history. The mere sight of this collection from the principal libraries and archives of Europe, which might have daunted the resolution of a younger man, in the possession of his faculties, filled me with apprehension bordering on despair; and I must be pardoned if I had not the heart to plunge at once into the arena, and, blindfold as I was, engage again in the conflict.

And then I felt how slow must be my progress. Any one who has had occasion to consult numerous authorities, — and those, too, in foreign languages, — for every sentence, will understand *how* slow and perplexing. And though, once entered on this career, I could have gone on in spite of obstacles, as, at times, I had already done, yet I hesitated before thus voluntarily encountering them.

Partial idleness.

The first six months after the publication of my "Peru" were passed in that kind of literary loafing in which it is not unreasonable to indulge after the completion of a long work. As I tired of this, I began to coquet with my Philip the Second, by reading, or rather listening to, the English histories which had any bearing on the story, and which could show me the nature and compass of it. Thus, I have heard Robertson's "Charles the Fifth," Watson's "Philip the Second," Ranke's "Popes," and other works of Ranke and Von Raumer done into English, and Dunham's volume relating to the period in his "Spain and Portugal." I have, also, with the aid of my secretary, turned over the title-pages and got some idea of the contents of my books and manuscripts; — a truly precious collection of rarities, throwing light on the darkest corners of this long, eventful, and, in some respects, intricate history.

The result of the examination suggests to me other ideas. There is so

much incident in this fruitful reign, — so many complete and interesting episodes, as it were, to the main story, — that it now occurs to me I may find it expedient to select *one* of them for my subject, instead of attempting the *whole*. Thus, for example, we have the chivalrous and fatal expedition of Don Sebastian and the conquest of Portugal; the romantic siege of Malta; the glorious war of the revolution in the United Provinces. This last is by far the greatest theme, and has some qualities — as those of unity, moral interest, completeness, and momentous and beneficent results — which may recommend it to the historian, who has the materials for both at his command, in preference to the Reign of Philip the Second.

Doubts about taking the whole subject.

War of the Netherlands.

One obvious advantage to me in my crippled state is, that it would not require more than half the amount of reading that the other subject would. But this is a decision not lightly to be made, and I have not yet pondered it as I must. Something, I already feel, I must do. This life of *far niente* is becoming oppressive, and "I begin to be aweary of the sun." I am no longer young, certainly; but at fifty-two a man must be even more crippled than I am to be entitled to an honorable discharge from service.

Anxiety.

With such mingled feelings, — disheartened by the condition of his eye, and yet wearied out with the comparative idleness his infirmity had forced upon him, — it is not remarkable that he should have hesitated still longer about a great undertaking, the ample materials for which lay spread out before him. Just at this time, too, other things attracted his attention, or demanded it, and he gladly occupied himself with them, feeling that they were at least an apology for not turning at once to his severer work.

Memoir of Pickering.

One of these was a Memoir of Mr. John Pickering, a wise, laborious, accurate scholar, worthy every way to be the son of that faithful statesman, who not only filled the highest places in the government under Washington, but was Washington's personal, trusted friend. This Memoir the Massachusetts Historical Society had desired Mr. Prescott to prepare for its Collections, and his memorandum shows with what feelings of affection and respect he undertook the work assigned to him.

"It will not be long," he says, "but, long or short, it will be a labor of love; for there is no man whom I honored more than this eminent scholar, estimable alike for the qualities of his heart and for the gifts of his mind. He was a true and kind friend to me; and, from the first moment of my entering on my historic career down to the close of his life, he watched over my literary attempts with the deepest interest. It will be a sad pleasure for me to pay an honest tribute to the good man's worth."

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Character of it.

The Memoir is not long nor eulogistic; but as a biography it is faithful and sincere, and renders to Mr. Pickering's intellectual and moral character the honors it so richly deserved. The style throughout is simple and graceful, without the slightest approach to exaggeration; such, in short, as was becoming the modest man to whose memory the Memoir itself was devoted.[4]

Spanish Literature.

Another of the subjects that occupied a good deal of his time during the spring of 1848 was a careful revision which he gave to my manuscript "History of Spanish Literature," then nearly ready for the press. It was an act of kindness for which I shall always feel grateful, and the record of which I preserve with care, as a proof how faithful he was and how frank. It took him some weeks, — too many, if he had not then been more than usually idle, or, at least, if he had not deemed himself to be so.

Work.

But he was not really idle. In comparison with those days of severe activity which he sometimes gave to his "Mexico," when his eyes permitted him to do for two or three hours a day what he could never do afterwards, his work might not now be accounted hard; but still, during the summer of 1848, it was real work, continuous and effective.

Reign of Philip the Second early thought of.

The great subject of the reign of Philip the Second had, as I have already intimated, been many years in his mind. As early as the spring of 1838, when he had only just sent to Madrid for the materials on which to found his histories of the Conquest of Mexico and Peru, and while he was still uncertain of success about obtaining them, he said: "Should I succeed in my present collections, who knows what facilities I may find for making one relative to Philip the Second's reign, — a fruitful theme if discussed under all its relations, civil and literary as well as military, the last of which seems alone to have occupied the attention of Watson."

In fact, from this time, although he may occasionally have

[4] It is in the "Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society," Third Series, Vol. X.

had doubts or misgivings in relation to his resources for writing it, the subject itself of the reign of Philip the Second was never long out of his mind. Somewhat more than a year later he says: "By advices from Madrid this week, I learn that the archives of Simancas are in so disorderly a state, that it is next to impossible to gather materials for the reign of Philip the Second. I shall try, however"; — adding that, unless he can obtain the amplest collections, both printed and manuscript, he shall not undertake the work at all.

Doubts about materials for it.

The letters to which he refers were very discouraging. One was from Dr. Lembke, who had so well served him in collecting manuscripts and books for his Conquests of Mexico and Peru, but who seemed now to think it would be very difficult to get access to the archives of Simancas, and who was assured by Navarrete, that, even if he were on the spot, he would find everything in confusion, and nobody competent to direct or assist his researches. The other letter, which was from the Secretary of the American Legation, — his old college friend, Middleton, — was still more discouraging.

Dr. Lembke.

Mr. Middleton.

"I enclose you," he writes, "Lembke's letter, and confirm what he says as to the difficulty of getting at the Simancas papers, or even obtaining any definite notion of their subjects. A young gentleman who had free access to them during six months, under the auspices of a learned professor, assured me that, with the exception of those relating to the Bourbon dynasty (i. e. since 1700), the papers are all thrown together without order or index. Whatever step, therefore, you may be inclined to take in the matter, would be a *speculation*, and the question is, whether it would be worth your while."[5]

But, as Mr. Prescott well knew, Simancas must necessarily be the great depository for original, unpublished documents relating to the reign of Philip the Second, the collection of which was begun there by that monarch; and he therefore determined to persevere in his efforts, and by some means

Simancas.

[5] These letters were written in 1839. In 1841, Mr. Middleton ceased to be connected with the Spanish Legation. When Mr. Prescott received the last results of his friend's care for his wants, he said: "I have received another supply, — the last of the manuscripts from Middleton, in Madrid. I lose there a good friend, who has been efficient and true in his labors for me."

obtain access to them. Indeed, as we have all along seen, he was not of a temper readily to give up anything important which he had once deliberately undertaken.

Materials in Paris.

Just at this moment, however, he was deprived of the services of Dr. Lembke. That gentleman had become obnoxious to the Spanish government, and was ordered out of the country with hardly the formality of a warning. But his first refuge was Paris, and there he was again able to be useful to Mr. Prescott. M. Mignet and M. Ternaux-Compans opened to him freely their own rich manuscript collections, and indicated to him yet other collections, from which also he caused copies to be made of documents touching the affairs of Philip. But Dr. Lembke, I think, remained in Paris only a few months, and never was able to return to Madrid, as he intended and hoped when he left it. His services to Mr. Prescott, therefore, which had been, up to this time, both important and kind, could no longer be counted upon.

Don Pascual de Gayangos.

Happily, however, Mr. Prescott was now able to turn to Don Pascual de Gayangos, the Spanish scholar, who, as we have noticed, had written eighteen months earlier a pleasant article in the "Edinburgh Review" on "Ferdinand and Isabella," and who was now in London publishing for "The Oriental Fund Society" his translation of Al Makkari on the Mohammedan rule in Spain. Some correspondence of a friendly nature had already passed between them,[6] and Mr.

[6] I have not been able to procure the earliest letters in the correspondence between Mr. Prescott and Don Pascual de Gayangos, and suppose they are lost. The earliest one that has come to my hands is from Don Pascual, and is dated Dec. 1, 1839. From this I infer that Mr. Prescott had written to him on the 30th of March preceding, to thank him for his review of the "Ferdinand and Isabella," and on the 6th of July concerning his literary projects generally; but that illness and absence from London had prevented Don Pascual from answering earlier. On the 28th of December, 1841, Mr. Prescott records in his memoranda: "I have had the satisfaction to learn from that accomplished scholar, Gayangos, that he will undertake the collection of manuscripts for me relating to Philip the Second's history, so far as it can be effected in Paris and London." A part of Mr. Prescott's correspondence with Don Pascual about the materials for a history of Philip the Second has already been given, as its dates required, while Mr. Prescott was employed on his "Conquest of Peru."

Prescott now asked Don Pascual's counsel and aid in collecting the materials he needed for his work on the reign of Philip the Second. He could not have addressed himself more fortunately. Don Pascual entered into the literary projects of Mr. Prescott, as we have already seen, in his previous correspondence, with great disinterestedness and zeal. He at once caused above eighteen hundred pages of manuscript to be copied in the British Museum and the State-Paper Office, London, and went, with an assistant, to the remarkable collection of Sir Thomas Phillips, in Worcestershire, where he again obtained much that proved valuable. Subsequently he visited Brussels, and, with letters from Mr. Van der Weyer, the accomplished Minister of Belgium in London, was permitted to take copies of whatever could be found in the archives there. Still later, he went to Paris, and, assisted by M. Mignet, discovered other rich materials, which were immediately transcribed and sent to their destination. The mass of manuscripts was, therefore, in 1842, already considerable.

British Museum.

Sir T. Phillips.

Mr. Van der Weyer.

M. Mignet.

But Spain was, after all, the country where the chief materials for such a subject were to be found; and nobody knew this better than Mr. Prescott. While, therefore, he neglected no resource outside of the Pyrenees; and while, by the kindness of Mr. Edward Everett, our statesman at once and our scholar, who happened then to be in Florence; by that of Dr. Ferdinand Wolf of Vienna, learned in everything Spanish; and by that of Humboldt and Ranke, at Berlin, each *primus inter pares* on such matters, he had obtained a great deal that was most welcome from the public offices and libraries of Tuscany, Austria, Prussia, and Gotha, — still he kept his eye fastened on Spain, as the main resource for his great undertaking.

Mr. E. Everett.

Dr. F. Wolf.

A. von Humboldt.

Ranke.

And here again he was fortunate. Don Pascual de Gayangos, having finished his important work for the "Oriental Fund," naturally returned to Madrid, with whose University he became connected as Professor of Arabic Literature. This was in 1842, and from that time he never ceased to send Mr. Prescott, not only rare books in large numbers, but manuscripts, both original

Don Pascual de Gayangos in Spain.

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and copied, of the greateſt value.[7] Already, in 1849, theſe collections ſeemed to be complete; but for ſeveral years more they were continued and increaſed. The muniment rooms of the great families in Spain — the Alvas, the Santa Cruz, and others — were thrown open; the Public Archives, the National Library, in ſhort, whatever could be uſed as a reſource, were all viſited and examined. In 1844, Don Paſcual ſpent nearly two months at Simancas, under the moſt favorable auſpices, and brought away and ſubſequently ſecured from this great treaſure-houſe and tomb of the Spaniſh government and its diplomacy ſpoils which one leſs familiar with the hiſtory of the times would hardly have been able to diſcover amidſt the confuſion that had ſo long reigned there undiſturbed.

In Simancas.

The collection thus made with great labor in the courſe of nearly twenty years is, no doubt, one of the richeſt and moſt complete ever made on any ſubject of hiſtorical reſearch. Setting aſide the books in Mr. Preſcott's library that relate only incidentally to the affairs of Spain in the ſixteenth century, the number of which is very conſiderable, there are above three hundred and ſeventy volumes that regard eſpecially the times of Philip the Second, and, when the manuſcript copies that had been made for him all over Europe were brought together and bound, they made fifteen thick folios, not counting thoſe which came to him already bound up, or which ſtill remain unbound, to the amount of eight or ten volumes more.[8] It needed many ſkilful, kind, and faithful hands in many countries to form ſuch a collection; but without the aſſiſtance of a ſcholar to ſuperintend and direct the whole, like Don Paſcual de Gayangos, full of knowledge on the particular ſubject, proud

Rich materials for the reign of Philip the Second.

[7] In a letter to Don Paſcual, dated March 27, 1842, he ſays: "I wiſh you could ſpend only three months in Spain, and I ſhould aſk no better luck." And again, July 14: "It will be very fortunate for me, if you can viſit both Paris and Spain. It will leave me nothing to deſire." Before the year was over, this wiſh was moſt unexpectedly fulfilled.

[8] The greater part of his rich collection of manuſcripts for the "Mexico," "Peru," and "Philip the Second," ſtood together, well bound in morocco, and made quite a ſtriking appearance in his library. He ſometimes called this part of it "his Seraglio."

of his country, whoſe honor he knew he was ſerving, and diſintereſted as a Spaniſh *hidalgo* of the olden temper and loyalty, Mr. Preſcott could never have laid the foundations he did for his "Hiſtory of Philip the Second," or executed his purpoſe ſo far and ſo well.

Some of theſe treaſures arrived in the courſe of the laſt two or three years of his life; but moſt of them were already on his ſhelves in the ſummer of 1848, when he had not yet given himſelf up to ſevere labor on his "Hiſtory of Philip the Second," and when, indeed, as we have ſeen, he was complaining of his idleneſs. But he was ſomewhat unjuſt to himſelf on this point now, as he had occaſionally been before. He had not, in fact, been idle during the ſummer. When the autumn ſet in and he returned to town, he had read, or rather liſtened to, San Miguel's "Hiſtoria de Felipe Segundo," publiſhed between 1844 and 1847 in four goodly octavos; the "Hiſtoire de l'Eſpagne," by Weiſs; the portion of Tapia's "Civilizacion Eſpañola," which covers the ſixteenth century; and the correſponding parts of Siſmondi's "Hiſtoire des Français," and of Lingard's "Hiſtory of England." But, above all, he had read and ſtudied Ranke's "Spaniſh Empire"; a book which whoever writes on the hiſtory of Spain muſt, if he is wiſe, conſider carefully in all its poſitions and concluſions. In his memoranda Mr. Preſcott truly deſcribes Ranke as "acute and penetrating; gathering his information from ſources little known, eſpecially the Reports of the Venetian Ambaſſadors."[9] "His book," the perſonal memoranda go on, "contains ineſtimable material for a more minute and extended hiſtory. It is a ſort of ſkeleton, the bone-work of the monarchy. It muſt be ſtudied for the internal adminiſtration, the financial ſyſtem, the domeſtic politics, &c.; — juſt the topics neglected by Watſon and the like common, uncommonplace writers. The hiſtorian of Philip the Second will be largely indebted to Ranke, to his original acuteneſs and to his erudition."

Begins inquiries about Philip the Second.

Reads various books.

Ranke's "Spaniſh Empire."

9 Since publiſhed at Florence, under the able editorſhip of the Cavaliere Eugenio Albèri.

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Mr. Prescott prints part of it.

This portion of Ranke's work, therefore, became now to Mr. Prescott what Clemencin's dissertation on Queen Isabella had been in the composition of his History of the Catholic Sovereigns. Indeed, foreseeing from the outset how important it would be, and finding it ill printed in the English translation, he caused four copies of the part touching Philip the Second to be struck off on a large type, so that, whenever his eye would permit the indulgence, he might recur to it as to his manual and guide. It makes in this form barely one hundred and sixty-eight pages in octavo; and being printed on thick paper and only on one side of each leaf, so as to render every letter perfectly distinct, it was as well fitted to its peculiar purpose as it could be. Probably he never looked on it for ten minutes together at any one time; but we have already noticed how thoughtful and ingenious he was in whatever related to the means of encountering the many obstacles laid in his way by his great infirmity, and how little he cared for money or ease when anything of this sort was to be accomplished. This reprint of Ranke was, in truth, one of his contrivances for an end that never was long absent from his thoughts.

CHAPTER XXI.

1848 – 1850.

General Scott's Conqueſt of Mexico. — Summer at Pepperell. — Difficulties and Doubts about "Philip the Second." — Memoirs or regular Hiſtory. — Anxiety about his Hearing. — Journey for Health. — Not ſufficient. — Project for viſiting England. — Reſolves to go. — Voyage and Arrival. — London.

WHILE Mr. Preſcott was going on with his "Philip the Second" as well as he could, conſidering the ſlow proceſs for work to which he was now reduced, — "dull ſailing," as he called it, — he was ſurpriſed by a tempting invitation to write a hiſtory of the Second Conqueſt of Mexico, — the one, I mean, achieved by General Winfield Scott in 1847. The ſubject was obviouſly a brilliant one, making, in ſome reſpects, a counterpart to the hiſtory of the

General Scott's Conqueſt of Mexico.

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first conquest under Cortés; and, as to the bookselling results that would have accrued from such a work glowing with the fervent life Mr. Prescott's style would have imparted to it, and devoted to the favorite national hero of the time, there can be no doubt they would have exceeded anything he had ever before dreamed of as the profits of authorship. But his course in another direction was plainly marked out, and had long been so. Contemporary events, transient and unsettled interests, personal feelings and ambitions, had never entered into his estimates and arrangements for a literary life. He felt that he should hardly know how to deal with them. He therefore declined the honor, — and an honor it certainly was, — without hesitation. "The theme," he said, "would be taking; but I had rather not meddle with heroes who have not been under ground two centuries at least." [1]

1849. Pepperell.

His weeks at Pepperell in the subsequent autumn of 1849 were agreeable, as they always were, but not as fruitful of literary results as they had been in many preceding years. "The delicious stillness of the fields," he writes soon after his emigration there from Nahant, "is most grateful after the incessant, restless turmoil of the ocean, whose melancholy beat makes no music like the wind among the boughs of the forest. The sweet face of Nature is the only face that never grows old, — almost the only one that we never tire of."

Anxiety about his sight.

But in truth the trouble lay deeper. He could do little work. His eyes were in a very bad state, and sometimes occasioned him much suffering. He therefore was able to "Philippize," as he called it, very little; and when he returned to town at the end of October, he recorded that he had had "a pleasant *villeggiatura*," but added: "The country is now dark with its sad autumnal splendors. Is it not my true home? Monadnock and his brotherhood of hills seemed to

[1] He often expressed this feeling. In a letter to me in 1856, he says: "I belong to the sixteenth century, and am quite out of place when I sleep elsewhere," — a remark which reminds one of old Bernal Diaz, who, it has been said, wore his armor so long and so constantly in the conquest of Mexico, that afterwards he could not sleep in comfort without it.

look gloomily on me as I bade them farewell. What may betide me of weal or woe before I ſee them again?"

But this was not a permanent ſtate of feeling with him. During that autumn and winter, he went ſlowly, but with much regularity, over the whole ground, which, as he foreſaw, muſt be occupied by a hiſtory of Philip the Second and his times, endeavoring to get a bird's-eye view of it in its general relations and proportions without deſcending to details. When he had done this, he felt that the time for a final deciſion as to the nature and form which his labors ſhould take was come, and he made it promptly and deciſively.

Heſitation about his "Hiſtory of Philip the Second."

"I have, indeed," he ſays, looking back over the eighteen months' deliberation on this ſubject, and conſidering at the ſame time the bad condition of his eyes and of his general health, — "I have, indeed, hardly felt courage to encounter the difficulties of a new work, *de longue haleine*, in my crippled ſtate. But if I am crippled, I am not wholly diſabled yet; and I have made up my mind to take the ſubject — the whole ſubject — of Philip the Second. I can, by a little forecaſt, manage ſo that it will coſt me no more labor or reſearch than a fraction of the ſubject, which I ſhould treat, of courſe, more *in extenſo*. I muſt ſelect the moſt important and intereſting features of the reign, and bring theſe, and theſe only, into as clear a light as poſſible. All the weariſome reſearch into conſtitutional, financial, eccleſiaſtical details, I muſt diſcard, or at leaſt go into them ſparingly; — only ſo as to preſent a background to the great tranſactions of the reign.

"The brilliant paſſages are numerous, and muſt be treated, of courſe, with reference to one another, as well as to their individual merit, ſo as to preſerve their reſpective proportions, and harmonize into one whole. A dominant and central intereſt for the mighty and richly varied panorama muſt be ever kept in view. The character of Philip will be the dominant principle controlling every other; and his policy will be the central object of intereſt, to which almoſt every event in the reign muſt be in a great degree referred. That policy, doubtleſs, will be found to be the eſtabliſhment of the Roman Catholic religion and of abſolute power. Theſe were the ends ever kept in view by him, and they muſt be ſo, therefore, by his hiſtorian, as furniſhing the true clew to his complicated ſtory.

Philip the central character.

"There will be no lack of great events of the higheſt intereſt and the moſt oppoſite character; the war with the Turks, and the glowing battle of Lepanto; the bloody revolt of the Moriſcos; the conqueſt of Portugal, and, preceding it, the Quixotic expedition of Don Sebaſtian; the tragic domeſtic ſtory of Don Carlos, and the myſterious adventures of Antonio Perez; the Engliſh invaſion, and the gallant days of the Armada; and above all, and running through all, the

Great events in his reign.

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Great characters in his reign.

glorious war of the Netherlands, — the war of freedom then begun and not yet ended.

"As for portraits, great events call forth great men, and there is good ſtore of them, — Don John of Auſtria, frank and chivalrous; the great Duke of Alva, a name of terror; William of Orange, the Waſhington of Holland; Farneſe, the greateſt captain of his times; Don Sebaſtian, the theme for romance rather than hiſtory; contemporary foreign princes, Henry the Fourth, Elizabeth, &c., and at home Charles the Fifth in his latter days, of which ſo little has hitherto been known; and Philip the Second, the maſter-ſpirit, who, in the dark receſſes of the Eſcorial, himſelf unſeen even by his own ſubjects, watches over the lines of communication which run out in every direction to the fartheſt quarters of the globe. . . . .

"I propoſe to go on with ſober induſtry, — the *feſtina lente* ſort, — working ſome four hours a day, and if the whole ſhould run to four volumes, which is enough, I may get out two at a time, allowing four years for each brace. *Da, Jupiter, annos!* But I muſt mend my habits, or I ſhall not get out a volume in as many centuries. . . . .

Doubts about the form of the work.

"I am not ſure that it will not be better for me to call the work *Memoirs*, inſtead of *Hiſtory*, &c. This will allow a more rambling ſtyle of writing, and make leſs demand on elaborate reſearch, and ſo my eyes and my taſte both be accommodated."

Synopſis of it.

To theſe general remarks he added, as he was wont in ſuch caſes, a ſynopſis or ſummary of the whole work he was about to undertake, — one intended to ſuggeſt the different ſubjects and points upon which he ſhould chiefly concentrate his attention, but not intended to govern his treatment of the details. It was a ſort of outline map, and was made in February, 1849.

But his doubts and anxieties at that time, and for a long while afterwards, were very conſiderable, both as to the form of his work, whether memoirs or hiſtory, and as to the amount of labor which his advancing years and infirmities might warrant him in hoping to beſtow upon it. While his mind continued thus unſettled, he talked with me much on the embarraſſments he felt, and I endeavored to ſtrengthen him in a purpoſe of taking up the whole ſubject under the graveſt forms of regular hiſtory, and treating it with abſolute thoroughneſs as ſuch; anxious neither as to how ſlow his progreſs might be, nor how laborious it might prove.

One ground of my judgment at that time[2] — but unhappily one which failed at last — was, that I counted upon a long life for him, like that of his father and of his mother. But I felt, too, whether he lived many years, as I fondly hoped, or few, that the most active and earnest occupation of his faculties was necessary to his own happiness, and that he would become discontented with himself, if he should not fulfil his own idea of what his subject implied in its widest and most serious requisitions. I did not, in short, believe that he would be satisfied to write *Memoirs* of Philip the Second after having written the *History* of Ferdinand and Isabella. Nor did I believe that scholars or the public would be better satisfied than he would be himself.

Reasons for making it a history and not memoirs.

He expresses his state of mind on this subject in his memoranda: —

June 28th, 1849. — At Nahant, where we arrived on the 23d, after a week of tropical heats in town, that gave me the dyspepsia. These summer months were once my working months. But now, alas! all times and places are alike to me. I have even ceased to make good resolutions, — the last infirmity of feeble minds. Since last summer, what have I done? My real apology for doing nothing is still my health, which hedges me round, whichever way I attempt to go. Without eyes I cannot read. Yet I constantly try to do something, and as constantly strain the nerve. An organic trouble causes me pain, if I sit and write half an hour, so that I am baffled and disheartened, and I find it *impossible* (shall I say the coward's word?) to get up a lively interest, — the interest I felt in happier days in my historical labors.

Unable to work well.

Yet I am determined to make one serious trial before relinquishing the glorious field, on which I have won some laurels, and on which I had promised myself a long career. I will make up my mind to dispense with my eyes nearly all the time. I will dictate, if I cannot write. I will secure three hours every day for my work, and, with patience, I may yet do something.[3]

Will make an effort.

I will not seek to give that minute and elaborate view of the political and economical resources of the country which I attempted in "Ferdinand and Isabella," and for which I have such rich materials for this reign. But I must content myself with a more desultory or a picturesque view of things, developing character as much as possible, illustrating it by the anecdote, and presenting the

[2] This was in 1849. He did not determine to write a history rather than memoirs, until he came to the troubles in the Netherlands, in October, 1851. And the change of purpose is to be noted after page 360 of the first volume of the American edition.

[3] He did not, in fact, succeed in getting so much work as this out of himself in the summer and autumn of 1849.

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general features of the time and the court. The work in this way, though not profound, may be amuſing, and diſplay that philoſophy which conſiſts in the development of human paſſion and character.

But not to be profound or elaborate.

Great events, told with ſimplicity, will intereſt the reader, and the baſis on which the narrative throughout will reſt will be of the moſt authentic kind, enabling me to preſent facts hitherto unknown, and, of courſe, views and deductions not familiar to the ſtudent of hiſtory. The book will loſe much of its value compared with what it might have had under happier auſpices; but enough may remain to compenſate both the reader and myſelf for the time beſtowed on it. But, then, I muſt proceed on the right principle; content with accompliſhing what the embarraſſments of my ſituation will permit me to accompliſh, without aiming at what, by its difficulties, would diſguſt me in its progreſs, and by its failure in the end bring only mortification and chagrin. I will try.

Finds it hard to begin.

The conditions were hard, and the firſt efforts he made to break ground were anything but cheerful or encouraging; for his eyes were in a very bad ſtate, and he was otherwiſe not a little diſordered. After an experiment of nearly a month, he ſays: —

Looked over various works for an introductory chapter. Worked about three hours *per diem*, of which with my own eyes (grown very dim, — alas! perceptible in this ſtrong light) about thirty minutes a day. I can manage with this to make progreſs on a leſs ſearching plan of ſtudy. Am now prepared *to think*. But after this long repoſe, the buſineſs of fixing thought is incredibly difficult. It muſt be done.

Begins at Nahant.

And it *was* done. On the 29th of July, 1849, at Nahant, he records: "Laſt Thurſday (July 26th), at 6 P. M., began the compoſition of Chapter Firſt of 'Philip the Second,' whether memoirs or hiſtory time will ſhow. Heavy work this ſtarting. I have been out of harneſs too long."

Goes to Pepperell.

At Pepperell, where he went with his accuſtomed eagerneſs on the 6th of September, his eyes were rather worſe than they had been at Nahant, and he was more troubled with dyſpepſia and his other chronic ailments. But he worked, againſt wind and tide, as earneſtly, if not as hopefully, as if both had been in his favor.

Winter in Boſton.

On his return to town, about the end of October, he talked with me afreſh concerning his plans in relation to "Philip the Second," of which he had been able to complete only two

chapters. On the whole, he was confirmed in his deciſion that he would take the entire reign of that monarch for his ſubject, and not any epiſode of it, however brilliant, like the war with the Turks, or the ſiege of Malta, or however important, like the grand tragedy of the conteſt with the Netherlands. But he did not feel ſtrong enough to make more of it than memoirs, as diſtinguiſhed from hiſtory. On the firſt point, I concurred with him entirely; on the laſt, I regretted his deciſion, but ſubmitted to it, if not as to ſomething inevitable, at leaſt as to a reſult concerning which his health and years afforded grounds, of which he was to judge rather than anybody elſe.

Determines to write memoirs and not *hiſtory*.

His deciſion, however, which ſeemed then to be final, had one good effect immediately. He worked more freely, and for a time made a degree of progreſs that ſatisfied himſelf. But about Chriſtmas his ſtrength began to fail. He loſt fleſh viſibly, and his friends, though they certainly did not look on the ſtate of his health with anxiety, yet felt that more than ordinary care had become neceſſary. He himſelf did not ſhare their feelings; but he had other doubts and miſgivings more diſheartening than theirs. In February, 1850, he ſaid: "Increaſing intereſt in the work is hardly to be expected, conſidering it has to depend ſo much on the ear. As I ſhall have to depend more and more on this one of my ſenſes, as I grow older, it is to be hoped that Providence will ſpare me my hearing. It would be a fearful thing to doubt it."

Health fails.

Fear of deafneſs.

Happily he was never called to encounter this terrible trial. Not infrequently, indeed, a ſuſpicion occurred to him, eſpecially about this period, that the acuteneſs of his hearing was impaired, as, in truth, I think it was, but in ſo ſmall a degree, that he was rarely admoniſhed of it, even by his own fears, and certainly never ſo much as to interfere with the courſe which his ſtudies neceſſarily took. But whenever the thought came to him of what might poſſibly be the reſult in this reſpect, darkneſs ſeemed to ſettle on his thoughts; and, although his elaſtic ſpirits ſoon obtained the maſtery, it was not until

Not well founded.

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after a ſtruggle ſuch as they had not heretofore been ſummoned to make. A few of my converſations with him on this ſubject were among the moſt painful that I remember ever to have had. But the moſt painful of them were later, in the laſt two years of his life.

Viſits Waſhington.

In the early ſpring of 1850, finding that he was leſs able to work than he had previouſly been, and that he could not command his thoughts for the concentrated efforts he had always found important to ſucceſs, he made a journey southward, to anticipate the milder ſeaſon. He was accompanied by his daughter, by Mrs. Charles Amory, by Mrs. Howland Shaw, and by his brother-in-law, Mr. William Amory, — a party as agreeable as affection and friendſhip could have collected for him. I chanced to be in Waſhington when he arrived there, and was witneſs to the pleaſure with which he

Hoſpitable reception there.

was everywhere received. All ſorts of hoſpitalities were offered to him by General Taylor, then Preſident of the United States; by the Calderons, his old and faithful friends; by the Britiſh Miniſter, Sir Henry Bulwer; by our own great New-England ſtateſman, Mr. Webſter, who had always entertained the ſincereſt veneration for the elder Mr. Preſcott, and always welcomed the ſon as worthy of his anceſtry; in ſhort, he was received by whatever was eminent in the diplomatic ſociety of Waſhington, or among thoſe collected there to adminiſter our own affairs, with a diſtinction not to be miſtaken or miſinterpreted. His friends ſought eagerly to enjoy as much of his ſociety as he could give them, and ſtrangers gladly ſeized the opportunity to know perſonally one with whom in ſo many other ways

Is little able to enjoy it.

they were already familiar. But he was little in a condition to accept the kindneſs which under different circumſtances would have been ſo pleaſant to him. He was not well. He was not happy. He felt that he needed the comforts and the ſolace to which he was accuſtomed at home. He remained

Return home.

in Waſhington, therefore, only a ſhort time, and then returned to Boſton.

The comforts of home, however, were not all that he

needed. He needed a change of life for a time, — ſomething that ſhould, as it were, renew, or at leaſt refreſh and ſtrengthen the reſources of a conſtitution which had ſo long been touched with infirmities, not of the graveſt ſort, indeed, but yet conſtantly ſo preſſing on the ſprings of life, and ſo exhauſting their elaſticity, that neither his phyſical nor his mental ſyſtem was any longer capable of the ſevere efforts which he had always claimed from them, and almoſt always claimed with ſucceſs.

Increaſed infirmities.

After ſome time, therefore, the project of viſiting England, which he had partly entertained at different times for many years, but had conſtantly rejected, recurred with new force. His friends, who had heretofore urged it on the ground of the perſonal enjoyment he could not fail to derive from ſuch a viſit, now urged it on the ſtronger ground of health, and of the ſort of renovation which ſo great a change of climate and of the modes of life and thought often give to the whole moral and phyſical conſtitution at the age which he had now reached. He acknowledged the force of what they preſſed upon him, but ſtill he heſitated. His domeſtic life was ſo wiſely regulated; everything about him was ſo carefully adjuſted and adapted, by the watchfulneſs of affection, to his peculiar infirmities, and the wants they entailed on him; in ſhort, his condition in his own home, and with his daily occupations, was ſo entirely ſuch as demanded only gratitude to God, that he naturally felt unwilling to interrupt its long-ſettled, even, and happy courſe. But the ſtrong hours conquered, as they always muſt in what regards health and life. The reaſons for a European excurſion grew every week more diſtinct and deciſive, and at laſt he yielded.

Project for viſiting England.

Is unwilling to go.

But determines that it is neceſſary.

He embarked from New York the 22d day of May, 1850. On board the ſteam-packet in which he took paſſage he found, as he found everywhere, the kindneſs that was drawn out by the magnetiſm of his own affectionate nature, and by his obvious infirmities, added to the ſtrong intereſt he had excited as an author. He was at once provided with readers for all

Embarks for Liverpool.

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Voyage and friends.

the hours when he was well enough to liſten, and among them were ſome members of the Middleton family of South Carolina, who were connections of his old claſſmate, and who became at once not only intereſting and agreeable companions, but perſonal friends. Notwithſtanding, therefore, the uſual tribute of ſea-ſickneſs, which he paid like others, and complained of as bitterly, his paſſage was far from being diſagreeable.

Arrival.

Juſt ſo it was when, at midnight, on Monday, the 3d of June, the veſſel on which he was embarked arrived in the Merſey, at Liverpool. The firſt voice he heard through the darkneſs, from a boat which came alongſide five minutes after the ſteamer's anchor had been dropped, was that of an Engliſh friend whoſe face he had not ſeen for three and thirty years, but whoſe regard had ſurvived unimpaired from the days when they had been together almoſt as boys in Italy. At the

Mr. Alexander Smith.

houſe of that friend, Mr. Alexander Smith, he found at once an affectionate reception, and remained there hoſpitably entertained until two days later, when he hurried up to London.

Journey to London.

"On Wedneſday, June 5th," he ſays in his ſecond letter to Mrs. Preſcott, "I came by railway to 'London town,' through the Engliſh garden, lawns of emerald green, winding ſtreams, light arched bridges, long lines ſtretching out of ſight between hedges of hawthorn, — all flowering, — ruſtic cottages, lordly manſions, and ſweeping woods; flocks of ſheep, and now and then peaſants ſhearing off the fat fleeces; cattle of the Durham breed, but all more or leſs white, often wholly ſo, — white as ſnow; the whole landſcape a miracle of beauty, all of the cultivated ſort, too tame on the whole; and before I reached the great leviathan, I would have given ſomething to ſee a ragged fence, or an old ſtump, or a bit of rock, or even a ſtone as big as one's fiſt, to ſhow that man's hand had not been combing Nature's head ſo vigorouſly. I felt I was not in my own dear, wild America."

Lady Lyell.

London hoſpitality had met him at Liverpool. Lady Lyell, to whom, like everybody elſe who was permitted to become really acquainted with her during her viſits to the United States, he was already much attached, had ſent him charming words of welcome, which he received as he ſtepped on ſhore in the

night.[4] Mr. Lawrence, too, his friend and kinſman, then American Miniſter at the Court of St. James, had begged him in the ſame way to be in ſeaſon for a large diplomatic dinner which he was to give on the evening that Mr. Preſcott would naturally reach London. Others had, in other ways, ſent ſalutations both courteous and cordial. It was all very flattering and kindly, and, accompanied as he was by his faithful and intelligent ſecretary, Mr. Kirk, he did not, from the moment of his landing, feel for an inſtant that he was either alone or upon a ſtranger ſoil.

Mr. Lawrence.

On reaching London, he drove at once to Mivart's Hotel, where lodgings had been engaged for him; but he had hardly alighted when Sir Charles Lyell entered and gave him his firſt London greeting, which he loved always afterwards to remember for its affectionate warmth. The dinner at Mr. Lawrence's he had declined, being too freſh from a long journey to enjoy it; but he took tea a little later with Lady Lyell, and went with her to the evening party at the Miniſter's, which followed the more ſerious dinner, and was, in fact, a part of it. His introduction to much of what was moſt diſtinguiſhed in Engliſh ſociety, including Lord Palmerſton and ſeveral others of the Miniſters, could hardly have been more agreeable or more graceful.

Arrival in London.

Sir C. Lyell.

Mr. Lawrence.

Firſt Introductions.

It was on this occaſion that he firſt ſaw the Milmans, with whom he had long felt acquainted, and to whom he ſoon became perſonally much attached. It was then, too, that he firſt

Mr. and Mrs. Milman.

[4] I add the anſwer to Lady Lyell's kind note, welcoming him to England.

TO LADY LYELL.

Liverpool, June 4, 1850.

MY DEAR LADY LYELL,

I have juſt received your kind note, in the midſt of trunks, *luggage* (you ſee my Yankee breeding), and all the other cuſtom-houſe trumpery from which it is ſo difficult a matter, after a voyage, to diſentangle one's ſelf. I am paſſing a day here with an old friend, and to-morrow ſhall take the eleven o'clock train for London. Many thanks for your agreeable invitation, which I ſhall have the pleaſure of anſwering in perſon to-morrow evening. I have declined an invitation to dine with our Miniſter, as I ſhall not be in condition to dine, ſo ſoon after my journey, with an array of Miniſters and Miniſters' ladies. But I ſhall be in firſt-rate condition for ſeeing friends whom I value ſo much as you and your huſband.

Pray remember me warmly to him, and believe me, my dear Lady Lyell, &c.

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Lord Carliſle.

ſaw the venerable mother of his friend Lord Carliſle, and many other perſons of diſtinction, his meeting with whom he often afterwards recalled with peculiar pleaſure. But that with Lord Carliſle went to his heart, and well it might, for it was warmer than he intimates it to have been, even in a letter to Mrs. Preſcott, in which he ſays, that it made him "feel as awkward as a young girl." A perſon who was preſent ſaid that Lord Carliſle almoſt embraced him. But he remained at this firſt London party only a little while. He was too tired after his journey.

Engliſh welcome.

From this moment his table was covered with cards and invitations. His preference and pleaſure were undoubtedly for the more cultivated and intellectual ſociety which received him on all ſides with earneſt cordiality; but he was alſo the faſhion. He was invited everywhere. He was the lion of the ſeaſon.[5]

His own letters to his family, and his more intimate friends, will ſhow this in the ſimpleſt and pleaſanteſt manner.

TO MRS. PRESCOTT.

London, Tueſday, June 11, 1850.

DEAREST SUSAN,

Viſit to Mr. and Mrs. Horner.

I returned laſt evening from a viſit to the Horners, Lady Lyell's parents and ſiſters, a very accompliſhed and happy family-circle. They occupy a ſmall houſe, with a pretty lawn ſtretching between it and the Thames, that forms a ſilver edging to the cloſe-ſhaven green. The family gather under the old trees, on the little ſhady carpet, which is ſweet with the perfumes of flowering ſhrubs, and you ſee ſails gliding by and ſtately ſwans of which there are ſeveral hundreds on the river. Any injury to theſe birds is viſited with a heavy penalty. The next day, Sunday, after dinner, — which we took at four, — we ſtrolled

[5] The Nepauleſe Princes were in London that year, and were much ſtared at for their ſtriking coſtumes and magnificent diamonds. Alluding to this circumſtance, Mr. Lockhart, the firſt time he met Mr. Preſcott, ſaid, playfully, but not without a touch of the cynical ſpirit always in him, that "he was happy to make the acquaintance of Mr. Preſcott, who, as he had heard, was the great lion of London, — he and the Nepauleſe Princes." "You forget the hippopotamus!" retorted Mr. Preſcott. It was not, perhaps, the moſt auſpicious and agreeable beginning of an acquaintance, but it did not prevent them from being a good deal together afterwards, and liking each other much. A parting dinner with Ford and Stirling at Lockhart's was always remembered by Mr. Preſcott as peculiarly gay and gratifying.

through Hampton Court and its royal park. The entrance to the park is not more than half a mile from Mr. H.'s house. We spent a couple of hours in rambling over it, — a most superb green lawn stretching in all directions, covered with avenues of stately trees planted in the time of William and Mary, mostly the English elm. Troops of deer were standing and lying idly round, and every now and then we started a hare. Whole companies of rooks — a bird seen everywhere here — sailed over the tops of the trees, — such trees! In front of the old palace were broad red gravel walks through the green turf, with artificial basins of water. In short, the real scene looked like the picture in our camera at Pepperell. Here was the favorite residence of William and Mary, and of their predecessor, the merry Charles the Second, whose beauties, by the hands of Sir Peter Lely, still decorate the walls. I fancied, as I strolled through the grounds, I could see the gallant prince and his suite sauntering among the lordly avenues, playing with his spaniels and tossing crumbs to the swans in the waters. We walked home at twilight, hearing the nightingale at his evening song, and the distant cuckoo, sounding so like the little toy the children play with!

Hampton Court.

The next day we had our picnic at Box-Hill, — a sweet, romantic spot in Surrey, on a high hill, looking over half the country, and fragrant with the odors of the box, which rises here into trees. There was a collection of seven and twenty persons in all, friends of the family. So we spread our cloth in a shady spot, and produced our stores of good things, and with the aid of a little of the spiritual with the material, we had a merry time of it. T—— A—— will tell you all about it, as he returns by the next steamer; so he intends, at least, at the present moment. The P——s return by it also. To think that I should have missed them! William was at just such a picnic last year, and I heard many kind things of him. He made some good friends here, and left everywhere, I believe, a good impression. I have written to our Minister at Madrid to look him up, for I have not yet heard from him. Unlucky enough! but I think he must soon turn up.[6]

Picnic at Box-Hill.

His son William.

. . . . . .

Friday noon.

I have so many things to tell you of since my last date, and so little time to do it in, dear Susan, that I don't know which to take, — the Ascot races, dinner at Sir Robert Peel's, — or I will begin (probably end) with the visit to Lady S——s, which I was about to make when I left off. I went at eleven, and found myself in the midst of a brilliant saloon, filled with people, amongst whom I could not recognize one familiar face. You may go to ten parties in London, be introduced to a score of persons in each, and in going to the eleventh party not see a face that you have ever seen before; so large is the society of the Great Metropolis! I was soon put at my ease, however, by the cordial reception of Lord and Lady C——, who presented me to a number of persons.

Evening party.

[6] The reference is to Mr. Prescott's eldest son, who had been some time in Europe, but with whom Mr. Prescott had found it difficult to come into communication at this time. The son did not yet know that his father had thought of leaving America, and he was, in fact, now in Africa.

Duke of Wellington.

In the crowd I ſaw an old gentleman, very nicely made up, ſtooping a good deal, very much decorated with orders, and making his way eaſily along, as all, young and old, ſeemed to treat him with deference. It was the Duke, — the old Iron Duke, — and I thought myſelf lucky in this opportunity of ſeeing him. Lord C—— aſked me if I would like to know him, and immediately preſented me to him. He paid me ſome pretty compliments, on which I grew vain at once, and I did my beſt to repay him in coin that had no counterfeit in it. He is a ſtriking figure, reminding me a good deal of Colonel Perkins in his general air,[7] though his countenance is freſher. His aquiline noſe is ſtrongly cut, as in earlier days, when I ſaw him at the head of his troops in Paris, and his large forehead has but few wrinkles. He does not ſhow the wear and tear of time and thought, and his benevolent expreſſion has all the *iron* worked out of it. He likes the attention he receives in this ſocial way, ſpending half an hour in working his way quietly through the rooms, and, having received the general homage, diſappears. He wore round his neck the ribbons and ornaments of the Golden Fleece, and on his coat the diamond-ſtar of the Order of the Garter. He is in truth the lion of England, not to ſay of Europe, and I could not take my eyes off him while he remained.

Dinner at Sir Robert Peel's.

Picture-Gallery.

We had a ſtately dinner at Sir Robert's, — four and twenty gueſts. He received us in a long picture-gallery. The windows of the gallery at one end look out on the Thames, its beautiful ſtone bridges with lofty arches, Weſtminſter Abbey with its towers, and the living panorama on the water. The oppoſite windows look on the Green Gardens behind the palace of Whitehall, — gardens laid out by Cardinal Wolſey, and near the ſpot where Charles the Firſt lived and loſt his life on the ſcaffold. The gallery is full of maſterpieces, eſpecially Dutch and Flemiſh, — among them the famous *Chapeau de Paille*, which coſt Sir Robert over five thouſand pounds, or twenty-two thouſand dollars. In his dining-room are alſo ſuperb pictures, — the famous one by Wilkie, of John Knox preaching, which did not come up to the idea I had formed from the excellent engraving of it; and Waagen, the German critic, who was there, told me, as I ſaid this to him, that I was perfectly correct in the judgment. So I find I am a connoiſſeur! There was a portrait of Dr. Johnſon, by Reynolds, — *the* portrait owned by Mrs. Thrale, and engraved for the Dictionary. What a *bijou!*

Autographs.

We ſat at dinner, looking out on the moving Thames. We dined at eight, but the twilight lingers here till half paſt nine o'clock at this ſeaſon. Sir Robert was exceedingly courteous to his gueſts; told ſome good ſtories, at which ſome laughed immoderately; ſhowed us his pictures, his collection of autographs, &c. He has the celebrated letter, written by Nelſon, in which he ſays, "If I die, *frigate* will be found written on my heart."[8]

[7] The reſemblance to the Duke of Wellington of the late Colonel Thomas H. Perkins, already referred to as a munificent merchant of Boſton, was often noticed and very obvious.

[8] An anecdote of this dinner, connected with an account of another, is happily given by Mr. Stirling, in a little memoir of Mr. Preſcott, which was originally publiſhed in "Fraſer's Magazine," for

Is not this a fine life? I am moſt ſincerely tired of it. Not that I do not enjoy the ſocial meetings, and there are abundant objects of intereſt. But I am weary of the diſſipation, and would not exchange my regular domeſtic and literary occupations in the good old Puritan town for this round of heedleſs, headleſs gayety, — not if I had the fortune of the Marquis of Weſtminſter, the richeſt peer in England. It is hard work to make a *life* of pleaſure. Where-

March, 1859, and was ſubſequently printed privately, with additions.

"Amongſt the many occaſions when it was the good fortune of the author of this ſketch to meet Mr. Preſcott, there is one which has eſpecially ſtamped itſelf on his memory. It was on a delightful ſummer day, at a dinner given at the 'Trafalgar,' at Greenwich, by Mr. Murray, of Albemarle Street. Of that ſmall and well-choſen circle, the brighteſt lights are, alas! already quenched. The feſtive humor of Ford will no more enliven the ſcene he loved ſo well; nor will the wit of Lockhart and the wiſdom of Hallam ever more brighten or adorn banquets like that at which they met their fellow-laborer from the New World. Everything was in perfection, — the weather, the preliminary ſtroll beneath the great cheſtnut-trees in Greenwich Park, the cool upper room with its balcony overhanging the river, the dinner, from the prefatory water-ſouchy to the ultimate devilled white-bait, the aſſortment, ſpirits, and converſation of the gueſts. On our return to town in the cool of the ſummer night, it was the good fortune of the preſent writer to ſit beſide Mr. Preſcott, on the box of the omnibus which Mr. Murray had chartered for his party. It was there that the hiſtorian related to him the fortunes of his firſt hiſtorical work, as told above. He likewiſe deſcribed with great zeſt a more recent incident of his life. Some days before that, he had dined with the late Sir Robert Peel. With the punctuality which was very noticeable amidſt all the buſtle of Mr. Preſcott's endleſs London engagements, he was in Whitehall gardens at the preciſe moment indicated on the card of invitation. It followed, as a natural reſult, that he was for ſome minutes the ſole occupant of the drawing-room. In due time, Sir Robert walked in, very bland and a little formal, ſomewhat more portly than he appeared on the canvas of Lawrence, ſomewhat leſs rotund than he was wont to be figured in the columns of *Punch*. Although not perſonally known to his hoſt, Mr. Preſcott took for granted that his name had been announced. It was to his great ſurpriſe, therefore, that he found himſelf addreſſed in French. He replied in the ſame language, inly muſing whether he had been miſtaken for ſomebody elſe, or whether to ſpeak French to all perſons from beyond the ſea was the etiquette of Britiſh ſtateſmanſhip, or the private predilection of Peel. After ſome introductory topics had been got over, he was ſtill further myſtified by finding the dialogue turned towards the drama, and being complimented on his great ſucceſs in that unfamiliar walk of letters. The aſtoniſhed hiſtorian was making the reply which his native modeſty dictated, when a ſecond gueſt, a friend of his own, entered, and addreſſed both of them in Engliſh. Mr. Preſcott had been miſtaken for M. Scribe, — a blunder ludicrous enough to thoſe who know the contraſt that exiſted between the handſome perſon of the hiſtorian, and the undiſtinguiſhed appearance of the moſt prolific of modern playwrights. By a curious chance, M. Scribe did not arrive until a large party of political and literary celebrities were ſeated at dinner, and Mr. Preſcott concluded his ſtory by remarking on the graceful kindneſs with which Sir Robert haſtened to meet him at the door, and ſmoothed the foreigner's way to a place amongſt ſtrangers."

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ever you go, you ſee wealth, ſplendor, and faſhion, — horſes, carriages, houſes, all brilliant and gorgeous; — but nothing like repoſe, and not always good taſte. All ſeem to be eagerly purſuing the goddeſs Pleaſure, — hard to be caught, and vaniſhing in the graſp. If I could bring it with a wiſh, Auguſt 15th would be here in leſs than no time,[9] — and then, Ho for Yankee-land! Mr. Rogers has juſt ſent me a meſſage to ſay, that he muſt at leaſt ſhake hands with me. How kind is this! although his houſe is crowded with viſitors, he ſees no one but his phyſicians.

Remember me kindly to George and Anna, and to any other friends. Kiſs mother and Lizzy, and believe me, deareſt,

Your loving huſband,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO MISS PRESCOTT.

London, June 14, 1850.

MY DEAR LIZZIE,

As your mother tells me that you are to write me this week, I will do the ſame good turn to you. What ſhall I tell you about? There are ſo many things that would intereſt you in this wonderful city. But firſt of all, I think on reflection, you judged wiſely in not coming. You would have had ſome lonely hours, and have been often rather awkwardly ſituated. Girls of your age make no great figure here in ſociety. One never, or very rarely, meets them at dinner parties, — and they are not ſo numerous in the evening parties as with us, unleſs it be the balls. Six out of ſeven women whom you meet in ſociety are over thirty, and many of them over forty and fifty, — not to ſay ſixty. The older they are, the more they are dreſſed and diamonded. Young girls dreſs little, and wear very little ornament indeed. They have not much money to ſpend on ſuch coſtly luxuries. At the Aſcot races yeſterday, I happened to be next to Lady ——, a very pleaſing girl, the youngeſt ſiſter of Lord ——. She ſeemed diſpoſed to bet on the horſes; ſo I told her I would venture anywhere from a ſhilling to a ſovereign. She ſaid ſhe never bet higher than a ſhilling, but on this occaſion would go as high as half a crown. So ſhe did, — and loſt it. It was quite an exciting race, between a horſe of Lord Eglinton's, named "Flying Dutchman," and a little mare of Lord Stanley's,[10] named "Canezou." The former had won on ſeveral occaſions, but the latter had lately begun to make a name in the world, and Lord Stanley's friends were eagerly backing her. It was the moſt beautiful ſhow in the world.

Young ladies in ſociety.

Aſcot races.

But I will begin with the beginning. I went with the Lawrences. We went by railway to Windſor, then took a carriage to Aſcot, ſome half-dozen miles diſtant. The crowds of carriages, horſes, &c. on the road filled the air with a whirlwind of duſt, and I ſhould have been blinded but for a blue veil

[9] The period at which he then propoſed to embark for home.

[10] Now (1862) the Earl of Derby.

which was lent me to ſcreen my hat and face. The Swediſh Miniſter, who furniſhed theſe accommodations, ſet the example by tying himſelf up. On reaching Aſcot, we were admitted to the *ſalon*, which ſtands againſt the winning-poſt, and which is occupied by the Queen, when there. It was filled with gay company, all in high ſpirits. Lord Stanley was looking forward to a triumph, though he talked coolly about it. He is one of the ableſt, perhaps the ableſt, debater in Parliament, and next Monday will make a grand aſſault on the Cabinet. This is the way he relieves himſelf from the cares of public life. I ſuſpect he was quite as much intereſted in the reſult of the race yeſterday as he will be in the reſult of the Parliamentary battle on Monday.

Lord Stanley.

The prize, beſides a conſiderable ſtake of money from ſubſcription, was a moſt gorgeous ſilver vaſe, the annual preſent of the Emperor of Ruſſia for the Aſcot races. It repreſents Hercules taming the horſes of Diomede, beautifully ſculptured, making an ornament for a ſideboard or a table, ſome five feet in height, and eighteen inches ſquare. What a trophy for the caſtle of the Earl of Derby, or for the Eglinton halls in Scotland!

The race.

The horſes were paraded up and down before the ſpectators, — betting ran very high, — men and women, nobles and commoners, who crowd the ground by thouſands, all entering into it. Five horſes ſtarted on a heat of two miles and a half. The little bay mare led off gallantly, — "Flying Dutchman" ſeemed to loſe ground, — the knowing ones began to ſhake, — and the odds roſe in "Canezou's" favor, — when, juſt as they were within half a mile of the goal, Lord Eglinton's jockey gave his horſe the rein, and he went off in gallant ſtyle, — not running, but touching the ground in a ſucceſſion of flying leaps that could hardly have bruſhed the wet from the graſs, for it began to rain. There was a general ſenſation; bets changed; the cry was for the old favorite; and as the little troop ſhot by us, "Flying Dutchman" came in at the head, by the length of ſeveral rods, before all the field. Then there was a ſhouting and congratulations, while the mob followed the favorite horſe as if they would devour him. He was brought directly under our windows, and Lady Eglinton felt, I have no doubt, as much love for him at the moment as for any of her children. It was a glorious triumph, and the vaſe was hers, — or her lord's, whom I did not ſee. Now I did not feel the leaſt excited by all this, but exceſſively tired, and I would not go to another race, if I could do it by walking into the next ſtreet; that is, if I had to ſit it out, as I did here, for three mortal hours. How hard the Engliſh fine people are driven for amuſement!

Windſor Park.

Coming home, we drove through the royal park at Windſor, among trees hundreds of years old, under which troops of deer were lazily grazing, ſecure from all moleſtation. The Thames is covered with ſwans, which nobody would dare to injure. How beautiful all this is! I wiſh, dear Lizzie, you could have a peep at the Engliſh country, with its ſuperb, wide-ſtretching lawns, its numerous flocks of ſheep, everywhere dotting the fields, and even the parks in town, and the beautiful white cows, all as clean as if they had been ſcrubbed down. England, in the country, is without a rival. But in town, the houſes are all dingy, and moſt of them as black as a chimney with the ſmoke. This hangs like a funeral pall over the city, penetrating the houſes, and diſcoloring the

The country in England.

The town.

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curtains and furniture in a very ſhort time. You would be amuſed with the gay ſcene which the ſtreets in this part of the town preſent. Splendid equipages fill the great ſtreets as far as the eye can reach, blazing with rich colors, and ſilver mountings, and gaudy liveries. Everything here tells of a proud and luxurious ariſtocracy. I ſhall ſee enough of them to-day, as I have engagements of one kind or another to four houſes, before bed-time, which is now with me very regularly about twelve, — ſometimes later, but I do not like to have it later.

Why have I no letter on my table from home? I truſt I ſhall find one there this evening, or I ſhall, after all, have a heavy heart, which is far from gay in this gayety.

Your affectionate father,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

The account of his preſentation at Court is much in the ſame ſtyle with the laſt. It is addreſſed to Mrs. Preſcott, and, after an introduction on ſlight ſubjects, goes on as follows: —

Thurſday, 6 P. M.

Breakfaſt with Mr. Milnes.

Well, the preſentation has come off, and I will give you ſome account of it before going to dine with Lord Fitzwilliam. This morning I breakfaſted with Mr. Monckton Milnes, where I met Macaulay, — the third time this week. We had alſo Lord Lyttleton, — an excellent ſcholar, — Gladstone, and Lord St. Germans, — a ſenſible and agreeable perſon, — and two or three others. We had a lively talk; but I left early for the Court affair. I was at Lawrence's at one, in my coſtume: a chapeau with gold lace, blue coat, and white trouſers, begilded with buttons and metal, — the coat buttons up, ſingle-breaſted, to the throat, — a ſword, and patent-leather boots. I was a figure, indeed! But I had enough to keep me in countenance. I ſpent an hour yesterday with Lady M., getting inſtructions for demeaning myſelf. The greateſt danger was, that I ſhould be tripped up by my own ſword. On reaching St. James's Palace we paſſed up-ſtairs through files of the guard, — beef-eaters, — and were ſhown into a large ſaloon, not larger than the great room of the White Houſe, but richly hung with crimſon ſilk, and ſome fine portraits of the family of George the Third. It was amuſing, as we waited there an hour, to ſee the arrival of the different perſons, diplomatic, military, and courtiers. All, men and women, blazing in all their ſtock of princely finery; and ſuch a *power* of diamonds, pearls, emeralds, and laces, the trains of the ladies' dreſſes ſeveral yards in length! Some of the ladies wore coronets of diamonds that covered the greater part of the head, others necklaces of diamonds and emeralds that were of a ſize perfectly enormous. I counted on Lady ——'s head two ſtrings of diamonds, riſing gradually from the ſize of a fourpence to the ſize of an Engliſh ſhilling, and thick in proportion. Lady —— had emeralds mingled with her diamonds, of the fineſt luſtre, as large as pigeon's eggs. The *parure* was not always in the beſt taſte. The Ducheſs of ——'s dreſs was ſtudded with diamonds along the

Dreſs for preſentation at Court.

St. James's.

Dreſſes.

border and down the middle of the robe, — each of the size of half a nutmeg. The young ladies, a great many of whom were presented, were dressed generally without ornament. I tell all this for Lizzie's especial benefit. The company were at length permitted one by one to pass into the presence-chamber, — a room of about the same size as the other, with a throne and gorgeous canopy at the farther end, before which stood the little Queen of the mighty Isle, and her consort, surrounded by her ladies in waiting. She was rather simply dressed, but he was in a Field-Marshal's uniform, and covered, I should think, with all the orders of Europe. He is a good-looking person, but by no means so good-looking as the portraits of him. The Queen is better looking than you might expect. I was presented by our Minister, according to the directions of the Chamberlain, as the historian of Ferdinand and Isabella, in due form, — and made my profound obeisance to her Majesty, who made a very dignified courtesy, as she made to some two hundred others, who were presented in like manner. Owing to there having been no drawing-room for a long time, there was an unusual number of presentations of young ladies; but very few gentlemen were presented. I made the same low bow to his Princeship, to whom I was also presented, and so bowed myself out of the royal circle, without my sword tripping up the heels of my nobility. As I was drawing off, Lord Carlisle, who was standing on the edge of the royal circle, called me, and kept me by his side, telling me the names of the different lords and ladies, who, after paying their obeisance to the Queen, passed out before us. He said, he had come to the drawing-room to see how I got through the affair, which he thought I did without any embarrassment. Indeed, to say truth, I have been more embarrassed a hundred times in my life than I was here, I don't know why; I suppose, because I am getting old. I passed another hour in talking and criticizing, especially with Lady T——, whom E—— D—— knew, and with Lady M—— H—— and Lord M——, all of whom happened to gather in that part of the room. I had also some talk with Sir Robert Peel and his wife, who has the remains of beauty, and whose daughter, much admired, according to Lord C., has much beauty herself. I talked also for some time with the old Iron Duke, who had more gold than iron about him to-day, and looked very well, although his utterance is not perfectly distinct, and he is slightly deaf.

Presentation.

Lord Carlisle.

Gossip at court.

After the drawing-room, I went at five to Stafford House, the Duchess of Sutherland's, where I lunched, and spent a couple of hours in rambling through the rooms of the magnificent palace ornamented with hundreds of the most exquisite paintings and statues, and commanding a beautiful view of Hyde Park. Nothing can be more kind than the behavior of the whole of Lord C.'s relatives to me. Luckily for me, they are of the best families in England. They treat me, one and and all, as if I were one of themselves. What can be so grateful to the wanderer in a foreign land, as to find himself at once among friends, who seem to be friends of an old standing? If I were to tell you of the cordial and affectionate greetings they give me, I should seem more vain than I seem now, I fear, — if possible. But you will feel that I am talking to you, and do not say half I should if I were really talking.

Stafford House.

Kindness of the Howard family.

I am most desirous to embark by September 1st, but I must see four or five

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ÆT. 54.

Projects for the country.

ſpecimens of Engliſh country-life; and Parliament — confound it — will not riſe before the middle of Auguſt, unleſs the Miniſtry are upſet, which may be. I have invitations to Lord Lanſdowne's, the Duke of Northumberland's, Lord Fitzwilliam's, the Duke of Argyll's, and all that kith and kin, — and ſeveral other places. Lord Carliſle wants me to go firſt to Caſtle Howard, then to old Nawarth Caſtle, on the borders, which he has entirely reſtored ſince the fire, and the family ſpend ſome weeks there. I am afraid all this will carry me into September. But if ſo, I ſhall abridge ſome of the viſits. I ſhall try to embark by the firſt of September.

. . . . .

Your loving huſband,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

To his mother he begins a letter in London, June 20th, but continues it from the Biſhop of Oxford's palace.

Cuddeſdon Palace, June 23.

Biſhop of Oxford.

You will be ſurpriſed at the date of my continuation, perhaps, dear mother. I am about ſeven miles from Oxford, at the reſidence of the Biſhop, called Cuddeſdon Palace; a very old building, and the manſion occupied from ancient times by his predeceſſors. The preſent Biſhop is the ſon of the famous Wilberforce. He is a very handſome man, poliſhed in his manners, and an eloquent preacher. He invited me to ſtay here two or three days. We have beſides a dozen perſons in the houſe, — a brother biſhop, Thirlwall, who wrote the "Hiſtory of Greece," an amiable and unpretending ſcholar; the Lawrences; Lord and Lady Caſtlereagh, &c. It is very convenient for me, as I am to-morrow to receive the degree of Doctor of Laws from Oxford Univerſity. The Marquis of Northampton,[11] who is alſo here, is to receive a degree at the ſame time, and a ſpecial convocation has been called for the purpoſe. After the ceremony we all lunch at the Vice-Chancellor's, and return in the evening to London. I came down to Oxford yeſterday in the train with the Lawrences. The Biſhop was obliged unluckily to remain in London till this morning, to attend the chriſtening of the laſt royal infant. He had arranged, therefore, that we ſhould dine with the Principal of one of the Colleges in Oxford, after which, at ten, we drove over to Cuddeſdon. Lord Northampton and I came over together, and I found him a lively, ſenſible perſon, full of intereſting anecdote. He has travelled a good deal, and is much connected with ſcience and ſcientific men. Before going to bed, the whole houſehold — gueſts included — went to the chapel, a very pretty building erected by the preſent Biſhop, and heard the evening ſervice, — very ſolemn, and parts of it chanted by the domeſtics of the houſe. There are two chaplains attached to the eſtabliſhment. My bedroom looks out on a lawn, dotted with old trees, over whoſe tops the rooks are ſailing and cawing, while a highly gifted

Lord Northampton.

[11] Preſident of the Royal Society. He died the next year.

nightingale is filling the air with his melody. I am writing, you must understand, at five o'clock in the afternoon, while the rest of the household have gone to the afternoon service in the parish church. I went there this morning, and heard the Bishop preach. He arrived here from London, late last night, after we had all retired to rest. The church is one I should much like you to see. It is of the greatest antiquity, — parts of it going back to the times of the Plantagenets, — to the reigns, indeed, of Henry the Third and John. Is not that a glorious antiquity? We sat in the venerable pile, where prayer and praise had ascended for nearly seven centuries. The crumbling walls have been restored by the present Bishop, a man of great architectural taste. The light streams in through the stained panes, on which the arms and names of a long roll of bishops, from the beginning of the fourteenth century, were colored. The service was performed with a ceremony quite Roman-Catholic. The chant was conducted by all the congregation, as it seemed to me, and a great deal of the service read by us was chanted. The sermon was adapted, or meant to be adapted, to a parish church; but I did not acquiesce in the views of the preacher, though the tones of his voice would have melted the most obdurate heart. They started an unfortunate urchin who had fallen asleep, and whom he paused in his sermon to admonish in a very pastoral but decided tone. There must be little danger of the good Bishop's flock going to sleep, I should think, with *this* sort of improvement of the discourse. In truth, he is so eloquent that there must be very little danger of it at any rate. I walked with some of the ladies for a long while under the old elms in the grounds, after church.

Sunday, and church.

. . . . . .

I wish you could see the pretty picture — the English picture — under my window; — the green lawn, as smooth as velvet and of as deep a verdure. There are circular beds of roses, and yellow and purple flowers, gayly set out in one part of it, clumps of stately elms and cypresses, throwing masses of shadow over the turf, and several of the party, returned from church, stretched out under the trees, while the great birds, the rooks, are wheeling in the air, and the woods are alive, as the evening sun is withdrawing his fiercer rays. For it has been "real" warm to-day.

Rural scenery.

Cuddesdon stands on a high terrace, and from the grounds, which are not extensive, you have a wide view of the rich vale of the Isis, as it winds through Oxfordshire. The pastures are covered with white or white-streaked cattle, that look as if they had been groomed like horses, so clean and shining are they, and flocks of sheep, that always speckle an English landscape. Then there is a beautiful chime of bells, that has twice sent its musical echoes to-day over hill and dale, filling the air and the heart with a sober Sabbath melody. Then just beyond the grounds, around the old church, lies the country churchyard, where rest the mortal part of many a brave soul that lived in the times of the Edwards and Henrys. What is there like these old links of Time, that bind us to the past, — as much our past as it is John Bull's?

Cuddesdon.

To-morrow morning we go to Oxford, for the ceremony of *Doctorizing*, which takes place in the theatre, before the Bigwigs. Our household all go over to do us honor, and eat the Vice-Chancellor's lunch, who wrote me a

note inviting me to bring my friends. So fare you well, dear mother. Pray be careful of your health. Do ſtay, if you can, ſome time with Suſan at Nahant. Give my love to her and Lizzie, with as many kiſſes as you pleaſe, and tell my dear wife ſhe muſt take this for her letter this time, as I intend to write to Ticknor. God bleſs you all.

Your affectionate ſon,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

He was at Cuddeſdon, as we have ſeen, partly in order to be near Oxford, when he was "called up" there, as the phraſe is, to be made a Doctor of Civil Law. Of this he gives a more diſtinct account in the following letter than I find elſewhere.

TO MR. TICKNOR.

London, June 26, 1850.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I muſt thank you for your kind letter by the Aſia, which made her trip in ten days and a bittock. I had written to my mother from Oxford that I ſhould ſend you a line by this ſteamer; ſo you will conſider me, if you pleaſe, as quick on the trigger as yourſelf.

Engliſh hoſpitality.

Well, here I am in the hurry-ſcurry of London, up to my ears in dances, dinners, and breakfaſts, ſome of the laſt at 10 A. M., ſome at 5 P. M., to ſay nothing of luncheons, the moſt beautiful of which that I have ſeen, was yeſterday at Lanſdowne Houſe. I am booked up for dinners to the middle of July, and then I intend to ſtop, as I may take a week for a trip to Holland, — the land of my hiſtoric *avenir*. Meanwhile I have invitations of one kind or another, often three or four a day. So I ſhall not go to ſleep till bedtime certainly; and I believe, though I have been here but three weeks, I have been induſtrious enough to be able to form a pretty good judgment of the ſtuff of

Engliſh ſociety.

which London ſociety is made. On the whole, it is a very extraordinary kind of life, and, as far as health is concerned, agrees with me wonderfully. My eyes and many *et-ceteras* are improved, and even the digeſtive organs, which muſt form the great *pièce de reſiſtance* in the battle, ſo far come up to the mark glorioufly. Yet it is a life, which, were I an Engliſhman, I ſhould not deſire a great deal of; two months, at moſt, although I think, on the whole, the knowledge of a very curious ſtate of ſociety, and of ſo many intereſting and remarkable characters, well compenſates the bore of a voyage. Yet I am quite ſure, having once had this experience, nothing would ever induce me to repeat it. As I have heard you ſay, it would not pay.

The world here are all in great agitation and ſuſpenſe as to the fate of the Miniſtry. It hangs, you know, on the vote of the Commons on the Greek

queſtion. I will not trouble you with the details, with which you are too good a reader of Engliſh politics not to be familiar. I was in the Houſe of Peers at the grand charge of Lord Stanley, and have heard ſome ſpeeches in the Commons, but not the beſt. If government do not get a majority of over thirty, at leaſt, it is underſtood they will go out, and then there will be ſuch a ſcramble, for they reign by the weakneſs and diviſion of their opponents. The voting on this motion will, I imagine, cauſe no leſs diviſion in the government ranks. It is curious to ſee the intereſt ſhown by the women in political matters.

Engliſh politics.

. . . . . .

What will intereſt you more than the conteſt is the aſſault made ſo brutally by Brougham on your friend Bunſen. I was preſent, and never ſaw anything ſo coarſe as his perſonality. He ſaid the individual took up the room of two ladies. Bunſen is rather fat, as alſo Madame and his daughter, — all of whom at laſt marched out of the gallery, but not until eyes and glaſſes had been directed to the ſpot, to make out the unfortunate individual, while Lord Brougham was flying up and down, thumping the table with his fiſt, and foaming at the mouth, till all his brother-peers, including the old Duke, were in convulſions of laughter. I dined with Bunſen and Madame the ſame day, at Ford's. He has ſince received ſcores of condoling viſits, as well as the moſt conciliatory communications from Lord Palmerſton, &c., &c. It will, probably, end in providing a place for the Corps Diplomatique, who have hitherto been ſhuffled with "diſtinguiſhed foreigners" into the vacant ſpace around the throne.

Lord Brougham's rudeneſs.

. . . . . .

I returned day before yeſterday from a viſit to the Biſhop of Oxford, Wilberforce, you know; one of the beſt-bred men, and moſt pleaſing in converſation, that I have met with. However canny he may be in his church politics, he is certainly amiable, for uniform good-breeding implies a ſacrifice of ſelf that is founded on benevolence. There was ſome agreeable company at the houſe, among them a lady, very well read, the daughter of a Biſhop, who told me ſhe had never heard the *name* of Dr. Channing! I gave her a great ſhock by telling her I was a Unitarian. The term is abſolutely ſynonymous, in a large party here, with Infidel, Jew, Mohammedan; worſe even, becauſe regarded as a wolf in ſheep's clothing.

Biſhop of Oxford.

Horror of Unitarianiſm.

On Monday morning our party at the Biſhop's went to Oxford, where Lord Northampton and I were Doctorized in due form. We were both dreſſed in flaming red robes (it was the hotteſt day I have felt here) and then marched out in ſolemn proceſſion with the Faculty, &c., in their black and red gowns, through the public ſtreet, looking, that is, *we*, like the victims of an *auto de fé*; though, I believe, on ſecond thoughts, the *ſan benito* was yellow. The houſe was well filled by both men and women. The Archæological Society is holding its meetings there. We were marched up the aiſle; Profeſſor Phillimore made a long Latin expoſition of our merits, in which each of the adjectives ended, as Southey ſaid in reference to himſelf on a like occaſion, in *iſſimus*; and amidſt the cheers of the audience we were converted into Doctors. We lunched with the Vice-Chancellor, who told me I ſhould have had a degree on Commemoration-day, the regular day; but he wrote about me to the Dean of St. Paul's,

Degree of Doctor conferred.

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who was abſent from town, and ſo an anſwer was not received until too late. He did not tell me that the principal object of the letter was to learn my faith, having ſome miſgivings as to my hereſy. M—— wrote him word that he thought my books would be found to be vouchers enough for me to obtain a degree. So a ſpecial convocation was called, and my companion in the ceremony was a better man than a military chief, like Lord Gough. I like Lord Northampton very much. He was at the Biſhop's, and we drove together from Cuddeſdon to Oxford.[12] He is a man of very active mind. He told me ſome good anecdotes; among others, an anſwer of the Duke to a gentleman who aſked him if he had not been ſurpriſed at the battle of Waterloo. The Duke coldly replied, "I never was ſurpriſed, as well as I can remember, till now, in my life." Did you ever hear of his fine anſwer to a lady who was glorifying his victories? "A victory, ma'am, is the ſaddeſt thing in the world, except a defeat." Now that Sidney Smith is gone, Rogers furniſhes the niceſt touches in the way of repartee. His converſation, even in his dilapidated condition, on his back, is full of ſalt, not to ſay cayenne. I was praiſing ſomebody's good-nature very much. "Yes," he ſaid, "ſo much good-nature, that there is no room for good-ſenſe." Perhaps you have heard of a good thing of Rogers's, which Lord Lanſdowne told me the other day he *heard* him ſay. It was at Lord Holland's table, when Rogers aſked Sir Philip Francis (the talk had ſome alluſion to Junius) if he, Sir Philip, would allow him to aſk a certain queſtion. "Do ſo at your peril," was the amicable reply. "If he is Junius," ſaid Rogers in an undertone to his neighbor, "he muſt be Junius *Brutus*."

Lord Northampton.

Rogers.

Since writing the preceding, I have paſſed half an hour with Lockhart in his own quarters. He ſhowed me ſome moſt intereſting memorials of Scott; among the reſt the diary, in which the trembling character, more and more trembling, and the tottering thoughts ſhowed the touch of apoplexy. Very affecting, is it not?

Macaulay has gone to Scotland to look over topography; among the reſt, the ſcene of the maſſacre of Glencoe. I have met him ſeveral times, and breakfaſted with him the other morning. His memory for quotations and illuſtration is a miracle, — quite diſconcerting. He comes to a talk, like one ſpecially crammed. Yet you may ſtart the topic. He told me he ſhould be delivered of twins on his next publication, which would not be till '53. I was glad to hear him ſay this, though it will be a diſappointment to brethren of the trade, who think a man may turn out hiſtoricals, like romances and calicoes, by the yard. Macaulay's firſt draught — very unlike Scott's — is abſolutely illegible from eraſures and corrections. He ſhowed me a ſheet juſt written. I found *cle* as an abridgment of caſtle, and all on that plan. This draft he copies always, with alteration, &c. This ſhows more care than I had ſuppoſed. He tells me he has his moods for writing. When not in the vein, he does not preſs

Macaulay.

[12] Mr. Preſcott had already received more than one honorary degree at home; but, with his accuſtomed ingenuouſneſs and ſimplicity, remembering how laviſhly and careleſſly ſuch diſtinctions are conferred by moſt of our American colleges, he could not repreſs his ſatisfaction that he was "now a *real* Doctor."

it. Johnſon, you remember, ridiculed this in Gray. H—— told me that Lord Jeffrey once told him that, having tripped up Macaulay in a quotation from "Paradiſe Loſt," two days after Macaulay came to him and ſaid, "You will not catch me again in the Paradiſe"; at which Jeffrey opened the volume and took him up in a great number of paſſages at random, in all of which he went on correctly repeating the original. Was not this a miraculous *tour d'eſprit?* Macaulay does not heſitate to ſay now, that he thinks he could reſtore the firſt ſix or ſeven books of the "Paradiſe" in caſe they were loſt.

Engliſh politics. The world here is agitated by the debate ſtill going on in the Commons, on which the fate of the Miniſtry depends. Lord Palmerſton made a moſt able defence evening before laſt. The Speaker ſays he never heard one ſuperior to it ſince he has preſided there, nearly a dozen years. His wife heard the whole of it, and ſeems to feel the full glory which has come upon her huſband. Yet, although it has made a good rally for the party, the iſſue is very doubtful. Day before yeſterday I dined with your friend Kenyon. *Kenyon.* I found him kind and moſt cordial. It is the firſt time I have ſeen him; no fault of his, for he has called, and repeatedly aſked me to dine; nor of mine, for I have called alſo. But meeting any particular body in London is a ſmall chance,—too ſmall to be counted on by any perſon. I have ſeen much of the Milmans and Lyells. *Engliſh kindneſs.* Nothing can be kinder. Lord Carliſle and his whole kith and kin, ditto. Theſe I had ſome right to count upon, but, in truth, the expreſſions of kindneſs from utter ſtrangers have been what I had no right to anticipate. I avail myſelf ſo much of this friendly feeling that I flatter myſelf I ſhall ſee as much of London (the interior) in ſix weeks as moſt of its inhabitants would in as many months. *Diſſipation.* Twice this week I kept my ground in the ball-room till ghoſt-time had paſſed, once till an hour after dawn. Am I not a *faſt boy?*

Duke of Wellington. Of all the notabilities no one has ſtruck me more than the Iron Duke. His face is as freſh as a young man's. He ſtoops much and is a little deaf. It is intereſting to ſee with what an affectionate and reſpectful feeling he is regarded by all, — not leaſt by the Queen.

Do you know, by the way, that I have become a courtier, and affect the royal preſence? I wiſh you could ſee my gallant coſtume, gold-laced coat, white inexpreſſibles, ſilk hoſe, gold-buckled patent ſlippers, ſword, and chapeau, &c. This and my Cardinal's robe on Monday! Am I not playing the fool as well as my betters? No wonder that the poet who lived in London ſhould find out that "The world 's a ſtage, and all the men," &c. But I muſt conclude this long talk, ſo pleaſant with a dear friend, but not without thanking you for ſo kindly condenſing my character into twelve hundred words; better than if you had had more words allowed to tell it in.[13] L——, in the haſte of my departure, aſked if he could not refer to ſome one, and I told him you; for I had rather be in your hands than in any other man's alive. If I had not been in yours, I ſhould have been in his. I hope to get ſomething better than the paralyſis

[13] A notice of Mr. Preſcott, which I prepared for a publication at New York, entitled "Illuſtrious Americans," where I was limited to twelve hundred words, as it was only intended to explain a portrait of him.

effigy which L—— got of me an hour before ſailing, as I am engaged to ſit for my portrait next week to an excellent artiſt, Richmond, in the ſame ſtyle as our Cheney, for Lord Carliſle; a thing I did not expect to do again.

With ever ſo much love to Anna, and Anika, and little Lizzie,

I remain, dear George,

Always affectionately yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO MRS. PRESCOTT.

London, Sunday, June 30, 1850.

DEAREST SUSAN,

I go this afternoon to the Dean of St. Paul's to lunch and hear his afternoon ſervice in the great Cathedral. I ſhall call for our good friend Lady Lyell, and take her with me. What ſhall I tell you of the paſt week? I will run over my engagements for yeſterday and a day or two coming, that you may know my whereabouts. I was invited to a rural party at a Mrs. Lawrence's, Ealing Park, where went the Duke of Cambridge. But I could not go, having engaged to viſit Lambeth, the old palace of the Archbiſhop of Canterbury, with my friends the Milmans. And friends they are; I wiſh you knew Mrs. M., you would ſo like her. Her letter to me laſt ſummer was a fair index to her character.

Mr. and Mrs. Milman.

. . . . . .

I received your letter, encloſing that of Amory, to whom I ſhall write this week. But I write ſo much to you, that it really leaves me little time for others. But writing to you is my chief happineſs, as it is talking with my beſt friends, you and mother. Well, where was I? At the Queen's. — (The ſervant has juſt brought me a note from Aliſon, inviting me moſt cordially to make his houſe in Glaſgow my head-quarters, ſhould I viſit Scotland, where he goes in a day or two. That is kind from a brother of the craft.) — After ſome of the company had paid their reſpects, dancing began. The Queen danced a quadrille very gracefully with the Prince of Pruſſia. The crowd in the neighborhood of the Queen was intenſe, and the heat ſuffocating. I ſtrolled through the whole ſuite of magnificent apartments, all filled with a blaze of beauty, ſimply attired in the young, and of age bejewelled from head to foot, — the men in their picturesque diplomatic coſtumes, or military or court-dreſſes blazing with diamond-croſſes and ribbons, and noble orders. It was a gorgeous ſight. At midnight we went to ſupper, the Queen leading in the proceſſion, while the whole band played the grand national air. The ſupper-table ran through the whole length of the immenſe hall, the farther end of which was hung with gold or gilt ſhields of great ſize and lighted up with a thouſand lights. The reſt of the room was in comparative darkneſs. It was a grand ſtage effect, which I did not much admire. The ſervants ſtood next to the wall. They were as many as could ſtand at the tables, which at the end were united by a tranſverſe table. They were all gold and finery, ſo that I felt very diffident of calling on them for

Aliſon.

Ball at the palace.

Supper.

anything. The Queen kept her ſtate at the head of the room, and, as well as her gueſts, was on the inſide of the tables. The ſupper was magnificent, eſpecially in fruits and confectionery. You know I have a failing in the way of confectionery, and the Engliſh have varieties that would make the fortune of a Yankee. After ſupper, dancing again, till I ſaw one young lady in a waltz before the Queen, who never waltzes, go down with a thump that I thought might have broken a bone. Two other couples had the like fate that evening. The floors are of hard wood and poliſhed. At two her Majeſty retired. So could not I; for my carriage was more than an hour in getting to the door, and the daylight was broad in the ſtreets before I laid my head on the pillow. There is the Court Ball! And from one you may learn all. We are now in great ſtir here for the accident which has befallen Sir Robert Peel; I called there to-day, and left my card, as do half London. It is curious to ſee the intereſt excited. A police-officer is ſtationed at the gates to prevent diſorder, and bulletins are handed round to the crowd, containing the laſt report of the phyſicians. You will ſee the particulars in the newſpapers. It is a ſerious, very probably a fatal accident.

Dancing.

Sir R. Peel.

. . . . . .

July 3d. — Sir Robert Peel is dead! The news has given a ſhock to the whole town. He died in his dining-room, — the very room where I was with him a fortnight ago. It ſeems a frivolous thing, this dining and dancing in the midſt of death. I am getting a-weary of the life, I aſſure you.

. . . . . .

Fourth of July. — William came in upon me to-day at noon. He arrived in the Southampton ſteamer from Gibraltar. He has been in Africa and Southern Spain, and, as his letters remained in Paris by his orders, he heard nothing of my being in London till he received a note from our Miniſter in Madrid. He looks very well, juſt as he did when he ſailed, except that he is as black as a Moor from the African ſun. It was a merry meeting on both ſides. He is very ſimple and unaffected in his manners, and is full of his adventures. He has brought with him your daguerrotype, the ſight of which, dear, was as welcome to me as the ſight of him. He has left ſome articles in Paris, and I think I ſhall let him run over there for a few days. On the 20th, I ſhall go with him for a week to Belgium; then take him with me to a few country-places, and early in September I ſhall embark. If Parliament did not continue ſitting till the middle of Auguſt, I ſhould not be ſo late. With love to mother and Lizzie, and to E. Dexter,

Arrival of his ſon William in London.

Projects.

I remain your loving huſband,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

My eyes are much better, and health generally very good. William compliments me by ſaying I look younger than when he left.

I am now writing to Amory,[14] and ſhall ſend the letters to-day. It is a fine day, and I go at noon on my expedition to Greenwich with Ford, Lockhart,

[14] His younger ſon, William Amory Preſcott.

Hallam, Stirling, Rawlinſon, Cummings the African lion-hunter, &c. William is to be one of the party. I ſat up with him late laſt night after my return from dinner, till one o'clock, hearing his Southern adventures, and indulging with him in the fume of cigars.

TO MRS. PRESCOTT.

. . . . . .

Ladies long in ſociety.

Wedneſday evening. — Juſt returned from the Counteſs Grey's. A ſmall party of ten. I ſat between two ladies, whoſe united ages amounted to one hundred and fifty, Lady —— and Lady ——. There was alſo a charming lady there to whom I loſt my heart, dear wife, ſome three weeks ſince. Don't be jealous, ſhe is over ſeventy, — Lady Morley, a moſt natural, lively, benevolent body. I know you would like her. I really think the elder bodies here are very charming. In fact, nobody is old. I have not ſeen any up to one I have left in Beacon Street. What a delightful letter from mother! Your letters of June 30th came in this afternoon. I have ſent your nice little notes to Lady Lyell and Mrs. Smith. How good it was in them to write! Your note to me was a ſhabby one. You muſt not write the leſs that others write. I ſhall anſwer Anna Ticknor by a good letter this mail for her kindneſs in thinking of me.

. . . . . .

TO MRS. TICKNOR.

London, July 18, 1850.

Thank you, my dear Anna, for ſo kindly thinking of me in the practical way of a letter. I knew your ſuperſcription before I broke the ſeal, and it was "good for fair e'en." I did mean to anſwer you with a bigger letter, but on returning home this evening after a viſit to the city, I found my friends here had cut out work enough for Mr. Kirk,[15] which could not be paſſed over. To-morrow I go to the Continent, an hiſtorical tour, for a few days.

Society in London.

I have now ſeen life in London and its environs, wealth, wit, and beauty, and rank; ſometimes without either; women talking politics, men talking nonſenſe; literary breakfaſts, faſhionable dinners, convivial dinners, political dinners; lords without pretenſion, citizens with a good deal, literary lions, faſhionable lions, the Nepauleſe, the hippopotamus, &c., &c. But I have not ſeen an old woman. As to age, nobody, man or woman, is old here. Even Miſs Berry is but *getting* old. I forgot, however, Miſs Joanna Baillie, — decidedly old, much older than her ſiſter. What a little world it is! Everything is drawn into the

[15] His ſecretary.

vortex, and there they ſwim round and round, ſo that you may revolve for weeks, and not meet a familiar face half a dozen times. Yet there is monotony in ſome things, — that everlaſting turbot and ſhrimp-ſauce. I ſhall never abide a turbot again.

Dinners.

The dinners are very agreeable, if you are planted between agreeable people. But what a perilous affair the ſettling of the reſpective grades, as you move in ſolemn proceſſion to the banquet! It is a nation of *caſtes*, as defined as thoſe in India. But what cordial hearts are ſometimes found under the cruſt of ſhyneſs and reſerve! There are ſome, however, ſo invincibly ſhy that they benumb the faculties of any one, — at leaſt, any ſtranger who approaches them.

Macaulay.

I have found the notabilities here pretty much as I had ſuppoſed. Macaulay is the moſt of a miracle. His *tours* in the way of memory ſtagger belief. He does not go about much now, except at breakfaſt. I loſt a pleaſant dinner with him on Monday at Deniſon's. His talk is like the labored, but ſtill uninter-mitting, jerks of a pump. But it is anything but wiſhy-waſhy. It keeps the mind, however, on too great a tenſion for table-talk.

Milmans and Lyells.

The Milmans are the moſt lovable people I have met with, always excepting our friends the Lyells and Lord Carliſle and his family. Theſe are the people whom I have ſeen the moſt of, and enjoyed the moſt; — invariable kindneſs, ſhown not merely in paſſing hoſpitality, but active meaſures for promoting one's happineſs in every way that a ſtranger could deſire. I have ſeen Rogers ſeveral times, that is, all that is out of the bed-clothes. His talk is ſtill *ſauce piquante*. The beſt thing on record of his late ſayings is his reply to Lady ——, who, at a dinner-table, obſerving him ſpeaking to a lady, ſaid, "I hope, Mr. Rogers, you are not attacking me!" "Attacking you!" he ſaid, "why, my dear Lady ——, I have been all my life defending you." Wit could go no further.

Rogers.

Since writing the above, I have returned from a dinner with Lockhart. We had only Ford, Stirling, and Major Rawlinſon. Carlyle was invited, but was unwell. He came the other day to a place five minutes after I left it, and I ſat next but two to him at a dinner-table ſome time ſince, and never knew I was in his company. Odd enough! It proves he did not talk loud that day. So I have never ſeen him; is it not droll? Yet there are many men I ſhould have more cared to ſee. Lockhart ſhowed us the diary of Sir Walter. He (Lock-hart) had two copies of it printed for himſelf. One of them was deſtroyed in printing the Memoir, for which he made extracts.

Carlyle.

But I muſt bid you good-night, dear Anna, as it is midnight. The iron tongue ſtrikes it as I write theſe words. Good night, dear friend. Much love to George and to Anika. Thank your huſband for his kind letter, which he will be kind enough to conſider partly anſwered in this. Love to little Lizzie.

Believe me, now and ever,

Yours affectionately

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

CHAPTER XXII.

1850.

Leaves London. — Haſty Viſit to Paris, Bruſſels, and Antwerp. — Letters. — Return to London. — Viſits in the Country. — Letters. — End of his Viſit to England. — Engliſh Character and Society.

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Paris.

THE expedition to the Continent was begun the next day after the laſt letter was written, and on the afternoon of the day following, July 20th, Mr. Preſcott was in Paris. But he did not ſtop there. He was in brilliant Paris hardly two days, and one of them was a Sunday. He left it on the 22d, and on the 23d wrote from Antwerp to Mrs. Preſcott a long letter, from which I ſelect the portion that has a general intereſt.

TO MRS. PRESCOTT.

Antwerp, July 23, 1850.

Bruſſels.

In Bruſſels I found myſelf in the heart of the Middle Ages. Old buildings of ſtone, curiouſly carved, immenſe gables and fantaſtic architraves, and cornices of the houſes; churches with antique Gothic ſpires. The Place Royale, in which my hotel ſtood, was the ſpot on which Charles the Fifth abandoned the crown in preſence of the moſt royal aſſembly that ever met in Bruſſels. What do I dream of at night? Not Charles the Fifth, but Boſton. That is a fact; but my waking dreams were of the ſixteenth century. I viſited the Hôtel de Ville, a moſt glorious municipal monument of the Middle Ages, ſtanding as it ſtood when, directly in front of it, thoſe gallant nobles, Egmont and Horne, were beheaded on a public ſcaffold by order of Alva. I viſited the houſe, a fine old Gothic edifice, ſtill ſtanding, from which the Flemiſh patriots walked out to the ſcaffold, and from the windows of which Alva witneſſed the execution. What a ſquare that is! If I don't make ſomething out of my viſit to Bruſſels and its glorious ſquares, I don't know what there is in eyeſight. Yet I do know what there is in the *want* of it too well. My eyes, however, have been much better of late, and I read ſome every day. Then the noble cathedral of Bruſſels, dedicated to Saint Gudule; the ſuperb organ filling its long aiſles with the moſt heart-thrilling tones, as the voices of the prieſts, dreſſed in their rich robes of purple and gold, roſe in a chant that died away in the immenſe vaulted diſtance of the cathedral. It was the ſervice for the dead, and the coffin of ſome wealthy burgher, probably, to judge from its decorations, was in the choir. A number of perſons were kneeling and ſaying their prayers in rapt attention, little heeding the Proteſtant ſtrangers who were curiouſly gazing at the pictures and ſtatues with which the edifice was filled. I was moſt ſtruck with one poor woman who was kneeling at the ſhrine of the ſaint, whoſe marble corpſe, covered by a decent white gauze veil, lay juſt before her, ſeparated only by a light railing. The ſetting ſun was ſtreaming in through the rich colored panes of the magnificent windows, that roſe from the floor to the ceiling of the cathedral, ſome hundred feet in height. The glaſs was of the time of Charles the Fifth, and I ſoon recognized his familiar face, the *whapper-jaw* of the Auſtrian line. As I heard the glorious anthem riſe up to Heaven in this time-honored cathedral, which had witneſſed generation after generation melt away, and which now diſplayed the effigies of thoſe, in undying colors, who had once worſhipped within its walls, I was ſwept back to a diſtant period, and felt I was a contemporary of the grand old times when Charles the Fifth held his Chapters of the Golden Fleece in this very building.

Hiſtoric ſcenes.

Saint Gudule.

But in truth I do not go back quite ſo far. A ſilly woman, with whom I came into Paris, ſaid, when I told her it was thirty years ſince I was here, "Poh! you are not more than thirty years old!" — and on my repeating it, ſtill inſiſted on the ſame flattering ejaculation. The Biſhop of London, the other day, with his amiable family, told me they had ſettled my age at forty, and that is juſt the age at which Richmond's portrait, ſo excellent, puts me! So I am

His own youthful appearance.

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convinced there has been ſome error in the calculation. Aſk mother how it is. They ſay here that gray hairs, particularly whiſkers, may happen to anybody, even under thirty. On the whole, I am ſatisfied, I am the youngeſt of the family.

I had a note to M. de Praet, Leopold's Miniſter, who lives with him in his palace at Bruſſels. Mr. Van der Weyer expreſſed a deſire that I ſhould ſee Leopold, and gave me the letter for that purpoſe. It would have been an eaſy matter, as the king is very acceſſible, with very little form, and, as he is a clever perſon, is an intereſting one in the line of crowned heads. But Fate has decided otherwiſe. On calling, I found his Belgian Majeſty was not to come to-day (I am writing Tueſday, the 23d) from his country-place, and had ſent for his Miniſter, half an hour before, to come to him. As I was to leave Bruſſels in a couple of hours, I left the note, with my regrets, and thus the foundation of what might have been a permanent friendſhip between us — I mean, of courſe, Leopold and me — was entirely deſtroyed! At three, I left Bruſſels for Antwerp, another of the great hiſtorical cities of the Low Countries. Our road lay through fat meadows, wheat ſpreading out for miles, all yellow as gold, and as high as a man's head; fields of the moſt tender green checkering the landſcape; rows of willow trees, elms, and lindens, all in ſtraight lines; hedges of hawthorn; ſuch a fruitful country as your eye never reſted on. It beats England all hollow. The women in the fields, reaping and binding the ſheaves; the cattle all ſpeckled white and black, ſuggeſting lots of cream, delicious butter, and Dutch cheeſes, — ſuch as Mr. B—— ſent me, you know; cottages wretchedly poor, ſhaded by old trees, and enchanting creepers and wild-flowers; the whole as level as a bowling-green. Dear Suſan, I never ſee anything beautiful in nature or art, or hear heart-ſtirring muſic in the churches, the only place where muſic does ſtir my heart, without thinking of you, and wiſhing you could be by my ſide, if only for a moment. But I ſhall be by yours before September is cloſed. I mean to take my paſſage, on my return to England, for the 7th.

Low Countries.

To-morrow I go by ſteam to Rotterdam, take a peep into Holland, and ſee "the broad ocean lean againſt the land." It will be but a peep. — But fare thee well. Good night, dear. Love to mother and Lizzie, and a hearty kiſs, by way of good night, to both of them. Remember me to Elizabeth and the Ticknors, and believe me,

Your affectionate huſband,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

He made a little excurſion in Holland, and, returning to Antwerp five days afterwards, wrote to his daughter on the 28th another long letter, like the laſt to Mrs. Preſcott, but one from which, as in that caſe, I omit ſuch details as are of a domeſtic nature and do not belong to the public.

TO MISS PRESCOTT.

Antwerp, Sunday, July 28, 1850.

DEAR LIZZIE,

. . . . . .

From Antwerp I went to Rotterdam, Delft, the Hague, Haarlem, and Amſterdam. At Delft I ſaw the ſpot on which William of Orange, the hero of the Netherlands, was ſtanding when he was aſſaſſinated; the very ſpot is indicated by a tablet in the wall. He was juſt coming down-ſtairs when he was ſhot by the aſſaſſin. The piſtol has been preſerved, and is ſo long that it could hardly have been preſented without touching William's body in the narrow paſſage. Was it not an intereſting ſpot to me? I wiſh you could have been with me on the viſit to Holland. Life is ſo different there from what it is anywhere elſe. Your mother would revel in its neatneſs. The great ſtreets of Rotterdam and Amſterdam are filled with women, all buſily engaged in different labors, ſome of which with us are performed by men. They were all dreſſed in neat caps, and with no bonnets or ſhawls, — ſo it ſeemed as if we were in ſome great houſe, inſtead of being out of doors. We went to the little town of Broek, remarkable even here for its extravagant neatneſs. The ſtreets looked as if they had been ſcoured down every day. We went into ſtables where the accommodations for cows were as nice as thoſe uſually for the maſters and miſtreſſes. They have a front-door to each of the houſes, which is never opened except for weddings and funerals. One thing would have delighted you in all the Dutch towns, the quantities of little babies, the prettieſt little roſy-faced things in the world, and without a ſpeck on their clothes. How the Dutch mammas manage their babies and their other handiwork, I don't comprehend. But every woman almoſt ſeems to have one of them in her arms. On the whole, I was much pleaſed with my bird's-eye view of the people, men and women, although the former do ſmoke intenſely, not heſitating to light their pipes and cigars in the carriage or at the breakfaſt-table.

William of Orange.

Holland.

Children.

. . . . . .

On the 29th of July he was again in his old quarters at Mivart's Hotel. His object, however, was not London or London ſociety; but Engliſh country life, and what is beſt in it. He began, therefore, a ſeries of viſits, with which, according to his previous arrangements, he was to cloſe his European excurſion; ſtopping, however, one day for a moſt agreeable dinner at Lord Carliſle's, to which he had promiſed himſelf before he went over to Holland.

Return to England.

His firſt country viſit was a charming one to Ham's Hall, in Warwickſhire, where he went with a kinſman and friend of

Country life.

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the ſtateſman who is the maſter of that noble and luxurious eſtabliſhment. The three days they ſpent there were moſt agreeable in all reſpects, involving, as they did, excurſions with a brilliant party to Kenilworth, Warwick, and Stoneleigh Abbey. But he was obliged to hurry away in order to keep an engagement for a great annual feſtival obſerved at Alnwick Caſtle, in Northumberland, and of which he gives a full account in the following letter to his daughter, — familiar certainly in its whole tone, but the better and more agreeable becauſe it is ſo.

TO MISS PRESCOTT.

Alnwick Caſtle, Auguſt 8, 1850.

MY DEAR LIZZIE,

It was very good of you to write me ſuch a charming letter, and ſo very intereſting. I received it here in the ancient caſtle of the Percys; and it was more pleaſant to my ſight than the handwriting — if I could meet with it — of Harry Hotſpur himſelf. So I cannot do better than to anſwer it by ſome account of the magnificent place where I am now quartered. We reached it three days ſince in a heavy rain. It rains in England twice as much as with us; and in the North and in Scotland four times as much, I underſtand. But nobody minds rain; and the ladies jump into their ſaddles or put on their walking-ſhoes as ſoon in a drizzle or a light ſhower as in ſunſhine. I wonder they do not grow web-footed, as I have told them. I received a note from the Duke a day or two before I left London, adviſing me to be in time for dinner, and it was juſt after the firſt bell rang that our carriage drove up. Alnwick Caſtle ſtands at the end of the town, from which it is cut off by high walls and towers, — and it looks out on a bold hilly country, with the river Aln flowing below its walls. My chamber, where I am now writing, overlooks a wide ſtretch of border land, made famous by many a ballad; and away to the weſt riſe the blue hills of Cheviot, with Chevy Chaſe between, and farther to the weſt is the field of Flodden. Is it not a ſtirring country? Then to look on it from the towers of Alnwick!

Rain in England.

Alnwick Caſtle.

I went down to dinner, and found the Duke with a few friends, waiting for the ladies. He gave us a cordial welcome. He was no ſtranger to me, as I have met both him and the Ducheſs in London. He is a good-looking man, with light hair, blue eyes, rather tall, frank and cordial in his manners. He has been a captain in the navy. He immediately took me to a window, and ſhowed me the battle-ground, where Malcolm, who ſucceeded Macbeth, was ſlain, when beſieging Alnwick. A little ſtone croſs ſtill marks the ſpot. In fifteen minutes the company aſſembled in the drawing-room to the number

of forty. The dining-room is very large, as you may imagine, to accommodate so many persons. There was a multitude of servants, and the liveries, blue, white, and gold, of the Duke were very rich. We had also our own servants to wait on us. The table was loaded with silver. Every plate was silver, and everything was blazoned with the Northumberland arms. The crest is a lion, and you see the lion carved on the stone-work displayed in sugared ornaments on the table, in the gilt panelling of the rooms, &c. As you enter the town of Alnwick, a stone column some sixty feet high is seen, surmounted by a colossal lion, and four monsters of the same family in stone lie at its base. The Northumberland lion has his tail always sticking out straight, which has proved too strong a temptation for the little boys of Alnwick, who have amused themselves with breaking off that ornamental appendage to a little lion sculptured on a bridge below the house. After dinner, which was a great London dinner over again, we retreated to the drawing-room, where a concert was prepared for us, the musicians having been brought from London, three hundred miles distant. The room was hung round with full-length portraits of the Duke's ancestors, some of them in their robes of state, very showy. I went to bed in a circular room in one of the towers, with a window, shaped something like a rose, set into a wall from five to six feet thick. In the morning I waked up, and heard the deep tones of the old clock announcing seven. My head was full of the stout Earl of Northumberland who

Dinner.

Family arms.

The castle.

> "A vow to God did make,
> His pleasure in the Scottish woods," &c.

As I looked out of the window, I saw myself to be truly in an old baronial fortress, with its dark walls, and towers gloomily mustered around it. On the turrets, in all directions, were stone figures of men, as large as life, with pikes, battle-axes, &c., leaning over the battlements, apparently in the act of defending the castle,—a most singular effect, and to be found only in one or two fortresses. It reminded me of the description in Scott of the warders pacing to and fro on the battlements of "Norham's castled steep," while the banner of Northumberland waved high in the morning breeze. It was a glorious prospect, which called up the old border minstrelsy to memory, and I felt myself carried back to the days when the Douglas came over the borders. The dwelling of the family is the keep of the castle, the interior fortress. It was entirely rebuilt on the old foundations by the Duke's grandfather. But in conforming to them he has been led into such a quantity of intricacies, odd-shaped rooms, perplexing passages, out-of-the-way staircases, &c., that it is the greatest puzzle to find one's own room, or anybody's else. Even the partition-walls are sometimes five feet thick. The whole range of towers, which are offices for domestics and for the Duke's men of business, together with the walls, are of the ancient Norman structure; and the effect of the whole, as seen from different points of view, is truly majestic. The print which I send you may give you some idea of the castle, though not a very good one.

At a quarter past nine the whole household assembled for prayers in the chapel, to the number, it might be, of over a hundred. Services were performed by the

Chapel.

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Duke's chaplain, and at parts of them every one knelt. Prayers in this way are read every morning in the Engliſh houſes that I have ſeen, and, where there is no chaplain, by the maſter. It is an excellent uſage, and does much for the domeſtic morals of England. From prayers we go to the breakfaſt-table, — an informal meal. After the breakfaſt the company diſperſes to ride, to walk, to read, &c.

Drives.

One day I amuſed myſelf with going over the different towers exploring the ſecrets of the old caſtle, with a party of ladies who could not be perſuaded to deſcend into the dungeon, which is ſtill covered by its iron grating in the floor above. The good old times! One day I took a ride with Lord M—— in the park, to ſee the ruins of Hulm Abbey. The park is a noble piece of ground, ſurrounded by a ring fence, a high wall of ten miles in circumference. It is carpeted with beautiful verdure, filled with old trees, and watered by the river Alne, which you croſs at fords when there are no bridges. As you drive along over the turf and among the green thickets, you ſtart hares and pheaſants, and occaſionally a troop of deer. The Duke has ſome red deer, which at times it is not pleaſant for the pedeſtrian to meet. Lord O—— told me that he was with a party once, when a ſtag of this kind planted himſelf in the path, and, on the carriage's advancing, ruſhed againſt the horſes, and plunged his horns into the heart of one of them, who reared and fell dead. On reaching the Abbey we found the Ducheſs with a party of ladies had juſt arrived there, in two carriages drawn by four horſes each, with poſtilions whoſe gay liveries looked pretty enough among the green trees. The Abbey is in a deep valley, a charming cultivated ſpot. The old monks always picked out ſome ſuch place for their neſt, where there was plenty of ſweet water, and feed for their cattle, and veniſon to boot. We wandered over the ruins, over which Time had thrown his graceful mantle of ivy, as he always does over ſuch ruins in England. From the topmoſt tower the eye ranged along a beautiful landſcape, cloſed by the Cheviots. In coming home, which we all did at a gallop, we found lunch ready for us, at half paſt two o'clock. This, too, is an informal meal, but it is a ſubſtantial one at Alnwick. After lunch we again took care of ourſelves as we liked till dinner. In ſhooting-time the park affords a noble range for the ſportſman, and plenty of trout are caught in the ſtreams. Thoſe of leſs murderous intent frequent the library, a large room ſtored with ſome thouſands of volumes, — ſome of them old enough, — and hung round with family portraits. In this pleaſant room I have paſſed ſome agreeable hours, with perſons who ſeemed to take the greateſt pleaſure in hunting up things for me moſt worthy of notice. Engliſh country-life brings out all the beſt qualities of the Engliſhman.

The park.

Hulm Abbey.

Occupations of the gueſts.

At ſeven o'clock again came the dinner, for which we dreſs as much as in town. One day we all dined — the men — at a public dinner of all the great tenant farmers in the county. The building was of boards and ſail-cloth, and lighted with hundreds of gas-lights. There were about a thouſand perſons, and the Duke and his gueſts ſat at a long table, raiſed above the others, and, as it ran croſſwiſe alſo to theſe, it commanded the whole hall. It was an animated ſight, eſpecially as the galleries were filled with the ladies of the Caſtle and the County. I luckily had laid in a good lunch; for as to eating in ſuch a ſcramble, it is hope-

Public dinner of the tenants.

leſs. There was a good deal of ſpeaking, and, among others, Lawrence did credit to himſelf and his country. I bargained with the Duke that I ſhould not be called upon. Without this I would not have gone. But I did not get off without ſome ſtartling alluſions, which made my hair ſtand on end, for fear I ſhould be obliged to anſwer them. But they told me it was not intended. The Duke himſelf ſpoke half a dozen times, as preſident of the feaſt. He always ſpoke well, and the enthuſiaſm was immenſe; — cheering, *hip hurrahs*, till my head ached. Our Miniſter's ſpeech was moſt heartily received, ſhowing a good-will towards Yankees which was very gratifying. It was an animating ſight, the overflow of ſoul and ſound. But I had rather have eaten my cheeſe-cakes alone in a corner, like Sancho Panza. Mr. Lawrence.

On returning to the caſtle we found an informal dinner prepared for us, and in another room a ſuperb deſſert of cakes, ices, and confectionery. The tables, both at breakfaſt and lunch, are ornamented with large vaſes of flowers of the moſt brilliant colors, with cluſters of white and purple grapes of mammoth ſize, pine-apples, peaches, &c. Talking of flowers, it is the habit now to ſurround the houſes in the country with beds of flowers, arranged in the moſt artificial forms, diamonds, circles, &c. The flowers are diſpoſed after ſome fanciful pattern, ſo as to produce the effect of brilliant carpeting, and this forms quite a ſtudy for the Engliſh dames. And ſuch flowers! If they had our autumnal woods, they would undoubtedly diſpoſe the trees ſo as to produce the beſt effects of their gaudy colors. Informal dinner.

Another day we went in to ſee the peaſantry of the great tenants dine, ſome ſixteen hundred in number, or rather we ſaw them for half an hour after dinner. The Duke and the Ducheſs took the head of the hall; and I thought the people, dreſſed in their beſt, to whom the dinner was given, as they drank off healths to their noble hoſts, would have gone mad with enthuſiaſm. I nearly did ſo from the noiſe. The Duke, on alluſion to his wife, brought her forward; and ſhe bowed to the multitude. It was altogether a pretty ſight. Perſons in their condition in England are obliged to be early accuſtomed to take part in theſe *ſpectacles*, and none do it better than our excellent hoſt and hoſteſs. They are extremely beloved by their large tenantry, who are ſpread all over the County of Northumberland. Dinner of the peaſantry.

The Duke has ſhown the greateſt deſire to promote the education and comfort of his peaſantry. "He wants us all to be comfortable," one of them ſaid to me; and the conſequence is he is univerſally beloved by them. Both he and his wife viſit the poor cottages conſtantly; and ſhe has a large ſchool of her own, in which ſhe aſſiſts in teaching the children. One of the prettieſt ſights was the aſſembly of theſe children in one of the Caſtle courts, making their proceſſions in the order of their ſchools; that of the Ducheſs being diſtinguiſhed by green jackets. The Duke and Ducheſs ſtood on the ſteps, and the little children, as they paſſed, all made their bows and courteſies, a band playing all the while. Afterwards came the feaſting. It was a happy day for the little urchins, — a viſit to the Caſtle; and I am told there was no ſuch thing as getting any ſtudy out of them for days previous; — and I will anſwer for it there will be none for days to come. As they all joined in the beautiful anthem, "God ſave Feſtival for the children.

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the Queen," the melody of the little voices roſe up ſo clear and ſimple in the open court-yard, that everybody was touched. Though I had nothing to do with the anthem, ſome of my *opera tears*, dear Lizzie, came into my eyes, and did me great credit with ſome of the John and Jeannie Bulls by whom I was ſurrounded.

Edinburgh, *Auguſt* 11*th*. — Here I am in the Scottiſh capital, dear Lizzie, where we have met Mr. Kirk, on his Northern pilgrimage, and to ſave time I am dictating this letter to him. But I muſt leave Edinburgh till another time, and wind up now with Alnwick. When it was known I was going, I had a quantity

Invitations.

of invitations all along my route, and memoranda given me to ſhow how I could beſt get to the different places. I took them all kindly, as they were meant, but can go to none. One of them, Lord and Lady O——, would have given me an intereſting place, for it is the only one which ſtill preſerves the famous breed of Chillingham cattle, ſnow-white and ſtill as untamed as zebras. The eſtate is really that of Lord O——'s father, a blind old peer, whoſe wife told me in London that ſhe had read my hiſtories aloud to him. So he might have known me

Leaving Alnwick.

without his eyes. My friendly hoſts remonſtrated on my departure, as they had requeſted me to make them a long viſit, and "I never ſay what I do not mean," ſaid the Duke, in an honeſt way. And when I thanked him for his hoſpitable welcome, "It is no more," he ſaid, "than you ſhould meet in every houſe in England." That was hearty. They urged me next time to bring your mother. I rather think I ſhall! They invited me alſo to their place at Stanwick; a pretty ſpot, which they like better than Alnwick, living there in leſs ſtate, which, as I learn from others, he keeps up no more than is abſolutely neceſſary. He goes from Alnwick to Keilder, where he and the Ducheſs paſs a couple of months with never more than two friends, the houſe being ſo ſmall that the dinner-room is alſo the ſitting-room. We can do better than this at the *Highlands*; Heaven bleſs the place dearer to me than Highlands or Lowlands in any other quarter of the globe!

Abbotsford.

Yeſterday we went to Abbotsford, Melroſe Abbey, and Dryburgh. Shade of Scott! I had a note from Lockhart, which inſtructed the houſekeeper to let me and my friends take our fill of the hallowed precincts. As I looked through the iron grating of Dryburgh, and ſaw the ſtone ſarcophagus of the great minſtrel, it ſeemed as if I was looking with you, dear, through the iron bars that fence in the marble ſarcophagus of our great and good Waſhington. But I muſt finiſh. To-morrow for the North, — Loch Katrine, Loch Lomond, Inverary Caſtle, where I ſhall halt for a few days. I have told William he ought to write to you, but he ſays the family have given up writing to him, ſo he leaves it all to me. How do you like that? I am glad you take ſo much comfort in ——; I knew you would. Pray remember me to the dear girl, and to ——, and to ——, when you write her. I mean to write to her ſoon. But you ſee what long letters I ſend to Fitful Head. Kiſs your mother for me. I know you are a comfort to her; you cannot be otherwiſe. With much love to your grandmother and Aunt Dexter, I remain,

Your affectionate father,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

His more general but ſtill very familiar views of Engliſh ſociety may perhaps be better gathered from a letter written after he had croſſed into Scotland, than from thoſe written on the other ſide of the Tweed.

TO MR. TICKNOR.

Edinburgh, Auguſt 16, 1850.

DEAR GEORGE,

As I could not ſend you a letter from Alnwick Caſtle by my regular amanuenſis, I have deferred ſending it till I came here, and have taken the liberty to carry off one of the Alnwick note-papers, to give you a more vivid idea of my late whereabouts. I was much pleaſed with my ſhort reſidence there, liking my noble hoſt and his Ducheſs very much. They are in truth excellent people, taking an active intereſt in the welfare of their large tenantry. The Duke is doing much to improve the condition of his eſtates. His farmers and tenants appear, from the glance I had at them, — that was at feeding hours, — to be a thriving, contented people, and overflowing with loyalty to the noble houſe of Percy. But I have written particulars of my viſit to Lizzie, in a letter, which, if you feel curious, I dare ſay ſhe will ſhow you, as I wiſh all my letters to be read by you and Anna, if you deſire it. I paſſed alſo ſome days with Mr. A——, a great landed proprietor in Warwickſhire; quite an amiable, cultivated perſon, who has taken an active intereſt in colonial affairs in Parliament. We had ſome agreeable people in the houſe, and I ſaw a good deal of the neighboring country, in the ſociety of our friend T——, through whom I became acquainted with Mr. A——. Mr. A——'s wife is T——'s couſin. But for my adventures here, I ſhall refer you alſo to family letters. I am now at Edinburgh *en route* for the North, and propoſe to be at Inverary Caſtle at the end of three days, taking the way of Stirling, Loch Katrine, &c.

Duke of Northumberland.

. . . . . .

I have been now long enough in London ſociety, I believe, to underſtand ſomething of it, and ſomething alſo of Engliſh country life, — far the nobleſt phaſe. Yet neither one nor the other, as they are conducted in the great houſes, would be wholly to my taſte. There is an *embarras de richeſſes*; one would want more repoſe. I am told the higher Engliſh themſelves diſcover ſomething of this taſte, and that there is leſs of profuſe hoſpitality than of yore. This is ſomewhat attributed to the railroads, which fetch and carry people with the utmoſt facility from the moſt diſtant quarters. It was a great affair formerly to make journeys of two or three hundred miles; arrangements were made long beforehand, and the gueſts ſtayed long after they got there. But now-a-days they ſlip in and off without ceremony, and the only place where the old ſtate of things perfectly exiſts is in a county like Cornwall, too rough for railways, — at leaſt for many. Your railroad is the great leveller

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after all. Some of the old grandees make a moſt whimſical lament about it. Mrs. ——'s father, who is a large proprietor, uſed to drive up to London with his family, to attend Parliament, with three coaches and four. But now-a-days he is tumbled in with the unwaſhed, in the firſt claſs, it is true, — no better than ours, however, — of the railway *carriages;* and then tumbled out again into a common cab with my Lady and all her little ones, like any of the common pottery.

Change of its character.

There are a good many other ſigns of the times to be ſeen in the preſent condition of the ariſtocracy. The growing importance of manufactures and moneyed capitaliſts is a wound, not only to the landed proprietors, but to the peers, who, it is true, are uſually the greateſt landed proprietors in the country. The laſt man raiſed to the peerage was a banker, a man of ſenſe, whom I have met ſeveral times. Another peer, Lord C——, — or ſome ſuch name, I may not have got it right, — whoſe brother, a well-known baronet, — I forget his name (I have a glorious memory for forgetting, and they ſay that is an excellent kind of memory), — was raiſed to the Houſe of Lords not many years ſince, — actually, I mean, the firſt nominative, Lord C——, applied to the Queen the other day to *dis-peer* him. After a grave conſideration of the matter with the Privy Council, it was decided that it was not in the power of the Crown to do ſo, and the poor man was obliged to pocket his coronet, and make the beſt of it.

Sir R. Peel.

Sir Robert Peel ſhowed his eſtimate of titles by his curious injunction on his family; as indeed he had ſhown it through his whole life. A perſon who, I believe, is well acquainted with the matter, told me that the Queen urged the title of Earl on Sir Robert when he went out of office; but he ſteadily declined it, requeſting only that her Majeſty and the Prince would honor him by ſitting for their portraits for him. Two indifferent full-lengths were accordingly painted for him by Winterhalter, the Flemiſh artiſt, and form one of the principal ornaments, as the guide-book would ſay, of Sir Robert's houſe. Peel, it is well known, was a good deal ſnubbed in his earlier life, when he firſt became a Cabinet Miniſter, by the ariſtocracy; ſo that he may have felt ſatisfaction in ſhowing that he preferred to hold the rank of the Great Commoner of England to any that titles could give him. Yet it ſeems almoſt an affectation to prevent their deſcending to his poſterity, though it is true it was only as far as they were meant as the reward of his own ſervices. He had too much pride, it ſeems, to digeſt this. As to the inferior ariſtocracy of baronets, knights, &c., there is many an old commoner that would refuſe it, with contempt. You know our friend Hallam's deciſion in regard to a baronetcy, though he did not expreſs himſelf like one of the old family of T——, who, when he was told that it was intended to make him a baronet, begged that it might be commuted to a knighthood, that the diſgrace might not deſcend to his poſterity. I had the ſtory from one of the ariſtocracy myſelf. You won't underſtand from all this that I think titles have not their full value, real and imaginary, in England. I only mention it as a ſign of the times, — that they have not altogether the preſtige which they once had, and the toe of the commoner galls ſomewhat the heel of the courtier.

Sir R. Peel's literary executors.

You know Sir Robert left to Lord Mahon and Mr. Cardwell the care of his papers. The materials will all be eaſily at hand if they biographize. Peel told

Mr. A——, whoſe eſtate lies near to Tamworth, that he preſerved all his correſpondence, except invitations to dinner; and on one occaſion, wanting an important letter in a great hurry in the Houſe of Commons, he was able to point out the file in which it was kept ſo exactly, that his friend Lord L—— went to Tamworth and got it for him in the courſe of a few hours. His death ſeems to have broken the knot which held together rather an anomalous party. Many ſpeculations there are about them, as about a hive of bees ready to ſwarm, of which one cannot tell where it will ſettle. The perſons moſt important in the party are Sir James Graham and Gladſtone, two of the beſt ſpeakers, indeed, if not the very beſt, in the Houſe of Commons. They are pledged, however, to the Corn-Law movement, and into whatever ſcale the Peelites may throw themſelves, there ſeems to be a general impreſſion that there can be no decidedly retrograde movement in regard to the Corn-Laws, at leaſt at preſent. The experiment muſt be tried; and the diverſity of opinion about it among the landholders themſelves ſeems to ſhow that it is far from having been tried yet.

Conſequences of his death.

Before I left town, almoſt all your friends had flown, — the Lyells, Hallam, the excellent Milmans, Lord Mahon, T. Phillips, — all but good Kenyon, whom, by the by, I ſaw but twice, and that was at his hoſpitable table, though we both made various efforts to the contrary, and poor Mr. Rogers, who, far from flying, will probably never walk again, — all are gone, and chiefly to the Continent. Ford has gone to Turkey, Stirling to Ruſſia; Lockhart remains to hatch new Quarterlies. He is a faſcinating ſort of perſon, whom I ſhould fear to have meddle with me, whether in the way of praiſe or blame. I ſuſpect he laughs in his ſleeve at more than one of the articles which come out with his *imprimatur*, and at their authors too. I had two or three merry meetings, in which he, Stirling, and Ford were met in decent conviviality.

Lockhart.

But I muſt conclude the longeſt, and probably the laſt, epiſtle I ſhall ever ſend you from the Old World, and I hope you will never ſend me one from that ſame world yourſelf. Pray remember me moſt lovingly to Anna and Anika, with kind remembrance, moreover, to Gray, and Hillard, and Everett, when you ſee them. No American Miniſter has left a more enviable reputation here. Lawrence, with very different qualities, is making himſelf alſo equally acceptable to the Engliſh. *Addio, mio caro.* With many thanks for your moſt intereſting letter on our Yankee politics, — more intereſting to me here even than at home, — I remain

Affectionately yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

He haſtened from Edinburgh, and puſhed on to Inverary Caſtle, the Duke of Argyll's, picking up on the way Sir Roderick Murchiſon and Profeſſor Sedgwick, who were bound to the ſame hoſpitable port. There he remained for a few days, but days of great enjoyment, and then turned his face ſouthward, feeling, at the ſame time, that he had the happineſs

Inverary Caſtle.

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of turning it towards his home. But great pleaſures and great feſtivities ſtill awaited him on the hoſpitable ſoil of Old England. Of theſe, the moſt ample and agreeable accounts will be found in the following letters.

TO MRS. PRESCOTT.

Caſtle Howard, Auguſt 24th, 1850.

DEAR WIFE,

Here we are at Caſtle Howard, by far the moſt magnificent place I have yet ſeen. But I will begin where I left off. After bidding adieu to the Duke and his charming wife at Inverary Caſtle, we ſailed down Loch Coyle and up the Clyde with Lady Elleſmere, and reached Glaſgow at eight. I poſted at once to Aliſon's, and was cordially received by him and Madame. He lives in an excellent houſe, ſurrounded by a handſome park. I found a company of ladies and gentlemen, and paſſed the hours pleaſantly till midnight, when I returned to Glaſgow. Aliſon has a noble library, and in the centre of it is a great billiard-table, which, when he wrote, he covered with his authorities. Droll enough! He ſhowed me a handſome tribute he had paid to me in the laſt edition of his Hiſtory. He had a cheerful fire in my bedroom, expecting me to ſtay. But it was impoſſible. The next morning we left for Naworth Caſtle, where I was to meet Lord Carliſle.

Sir Archibald Aliſon.

Naworth Caſtle.

This is a fine old place, of the feudal times, indeed. In the afternoon we arrived, and ſaw the towers with the banners of the Howards and Dacres flying from the battlements, telling us that its lord was there. He came out to greet us, dreſſed in his travelling garb, — for he had juſt arrived, — with his Scotch ſhawl twiſted round his body. Was it not kind in him to come this diſtance — a hundred and fifty miles — ſolely to ſhow me the place, and that when he was over head and ears in preparations for the Queen? What a ſuperb piece of antiquity, looking ſtill as when Lord Surrey's minſtrel

> "Forſook, for Naworth's iron towers,
> Windſor's ſweet groves and courtly bowers."

It was partially injured by fire; but Lord Carliſle has nearly reſtored it, and in the beſt taſte, by copying the antique. Fortunately the walls of the building, with its charming old ivy and eglantines, are unſcathed, and a good deal of the interior. It ſtands proudly over a deep ravine, briſtled with pines, with a running brook brawling below; a wild ſcene, fit for a great border fortreſs. The hall is a hundred feet long and thirty high, hung round with armorial quarterings of the family. Before dinner we viſited the rich old ruins of Lanercoſt Abbey, which ſtand on Lord C.'s grounds; walking miles through the wildeſt mountain ſcenery to get at it. Every one we met ſhowed a reſpect for the lord of the domain, which ſeemed to be mingled with warmer feelings, as he ſpoke

Lord Carliſle.

kindly to each one, aſking them about their families, &c. Indeed, it is very gratifying to ſee the great deference ſhown to Lord Carliſle all along the route, on my way to Caſtle Howard. Every one ſeemed to know him, and uncover themſelves before him. Lady E—— told me — what I have often heard — that he was more generally beloved than any man in the country.

Dinner.

We found on our return a game dinner ſmoking for us, for which we were indebted to Mr. Charles Howard, a younger brother, and Baron Parke,[1] his father-in-law, who had been ſlaughtering grouſe and black-cock on the moors. Our table was laid on the dais, the upper part of the long hall, with a great ſcreen to keep off the cold, and a fire ſuch as belted Will Howard himſelf never ſaw, for it was of coal, of which Lord C. has ſome mines in the neighborhood. The chimney, which has a grate to correſpond, is full twelve feet in breadth; a fine old baronial chimney, at which they roaſted whole oxen I ſuppoſe. We all ſoon felt as if we could have ſnapped our fingers at "Belted Will," if he had come to claim his own again. There are ſome fine old portraits in the hall; among them one of this hero and his wife, who brought the eſtate into the Howard family. She was a Dacre. The embraſures of the drawing-room windows of this old caſtle are about ten feet thick. I have got ſome drawings of the place which Lady —— gave me, and which will give you a better idea of it. Next morning we took up our march for Caſtle Howard, — ſeventeen miles from York. You can follow me on the map.

We arrived about ſix; found Lady Mary Howard in a pony phaeton with a pair of pretty cream-colored ſteeds, waiting for us at the ſtation, three miles diſtant. There was a rumble, ſo that all the party were accommodated. The ſcenery was of a different character from that of Naworth. Wide-ſpreading lawns, large and long avenues of beech and oak, beautiful pieces of water, on which white ſwans were proudly ſailing, an extenſive park, with any quantity of deer, ſeveral of them perfectly white, grazing under the trees, all made up a brilliant picture of the ſofter ſcenery of England. We paſſed under ſeveral ornamented ſtone arches by a lofty obeliſk of yellow ſtone, and at length came in full view of the princely palace of the Howards.

Park of Caſtle Howard.

It is of clear yellow ſtone, richly ornamented with ſtatues and every kind of decoration. It makes three ſides of a ſquare, and you will form ſome idea of its extent, when I tell you that a ſuite of rooms continues round the houſe ſix hundred feet in length. I have ſeen doors open through the whole front of the building, three hundred feet, as long as Park Street, — a viſta indeed. The great hall, riſing to the top of the houſe, is gorgeous with decoration, and of immenſe ſize. The apartments and the interminable corridors are filled with maſterpieces of art, painting and ſculpture. In every room you are ſurrounded with the moſt beautiful objects of *virtù*, — tables of porphyry and Oriental alabaſter, vaſes of the moſt elegant and capricious forms, &c. The rooms are generally not large, but very lofty and richly gilt and carved, and many of them hung with old Gobelins tapeſtry. Critics find much fault with the building itſelf, as overloaded with ornament. It was built by Vanbrugh, who built Blenheim, — both in the ſame ornamental ſtyle.

The caſtle itſelf.

[1] Now Lord Wenſleydale (1862).

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Lady Carlisle and her family.

Nothing could be more cordial than the reception I met with. Lady Carlisle reminds me so of mother; so full of kindness. If you could see the, not attention, but affection, which all the family show me, it would go to your heart. I spoke yesterday of writing to my late charming hostess, the Duchess of Argyll, and the kind old lady insisted on being my secretary instead of William. So I went into her dressing-room, and we concocted half a dozen pages, which she wrote off, at my dictation, as rapidly, and with as pretty a hand, as her granddaughter. We found only some of the family here; Lady Dover, the widow of Lord Dover and sister of Lord Carlisle, and her two daughters. Last evening we had another arrival, the splendid Duchess of Sutherland among others, and William's friend, young Lord Dufferin. I drove over with Lady Mary in the pony phaeton to the station. Some went on horseback, and two showy barouches, with four horses each, one of bays, the other grays, with young postilions in burnished liveries. It was a brilliant show as we all came merrily over the park, and at full gallop through the villages in the neighborhood.

The Queen coming.

All now is bustle and preparation for the royal visit, which is to come off on Tuesday, the 27th, — to take up two days. The Queen and Prince, with four children, and five and twenty in their suite, chiefly domestics. Lord Carlisle's family, brothers and sisters, and sons and daughters, will muster over twenty. So that he has really not asked another, besides Will and myself, except those in attendance on the Queen. He has put off having my portrait engraved till after these festivities, and has actually had it brought down here, where he has hung it up beside the Prince's and the Queen's, for her Majesty to look at. This is a sample of all the rest, and I suppose you won't think me a ninny for telling you of it.

Dining-hall.

The dining-room will be such as the Queen cannot boast of in Buckingham Palace. It is to be the centre of the famous Picture Gallery, one hundred and fifty feet long. This centre is an octagon of great height; and a table has been made, of hexagon shape, twenty feet across each way. It is to hold thirty-six, the number of guests and residents of the Castle. On one of the days a lunch for double the number will be spread, and people invited, when two long ends are to be added to the table, running up the gallery. You may imagine the show in this splendid apartment, one side of which is ornamented with statues, and with the costliest pictures of the Orleans Collection; the other, with a noble library in rich bindings; the windows opening on a velvet lawn and a silver sheet of water. But this will not be seen at the dinner hour of eight. The centre of the table will be occupied with candelabra, pyramids of lights and flowers, and we shall all be able to see the way in which her gracious Majesty deports herself. But I believe I must wind up my yarn, and spin some for somebody else.

Game of billiards.

I must tell you of one of my accomplishments. Last night we played billiards; — the game of pool, a number of gentlemen and ladies. Each person has three lives. All had lost their lives but Lord Dufferin and myself. He had three and I had only one. The pool of sixpences would go to the victor. There was a great sensation, as he, being a capital player, had deprived many of

their lives; that is, pocketed their balls. I ſtruck him into a pocket, which coſt him one life, — a general ſhout, — the whole houſe was there. He miſſed his ſtroke and pocketed himſelf; thus he loſt two lives and we were equal. The ſtir was great,— all ſhouting, as I played, "Hit him there, you can't fail! kill him!" &c., &c. We fought round and round the table and he took off his coat. So did not I, but buttoned up mine. As he miſſed a hazard and left his ball expoſed, the ſilence was breathleſs. I ſtruck him into the pocket amidſt a ſhout that made the caſtle ring again. It was juſt twelve o'clock when I retired with my laurels and ſixpences. Will, who is an excellent player, miſſed fire on this occaſion, and I, who am a poor one, had all his luck.

I have taken my paſſage, and paid for it, on board the Niagara, the ſame veſſel I came out in, for September 14th, a week later than I intended. But I found I ſhould be too much hurried by the 7th. This will give me three weeks in old Pepperell. But it will take me *viâ* New York. I ſhall write to you once more. Love to mother and Lizzie. I ſhall write E. Dexter by this. Don't forget me alſo to the Ticknors and other old friends, and believe me, deareſt wife,

Your ever-loving huſband,

W. H. P.

Auguſt 26th. — Having nothing elſe to do, as there is juſt now a general lull in the breeze and I have ſome leiſure, I will go on with my domeſtic chat. I left off, — let me ſee, — Sunday. In the evening we had little games, &c. of converſation, as at Pepperell. But the chief buſineſs was lighting up the ſplendid pictures ſo as to ſee the beſt effect; arranging the lights, &c. Beautiful pictures by any light. Before retiring we heard prayers in the noble hall; all the houſehold, including a large troop of domeſtics. The effect in this gorgeous room, as large and as richly ornamented as an Italian church, was very fine. Yeſterday, the weather fair, we drove over the park. Firſt I went with Lady Mary, who whipped me along in her pony-carriage. After lunch I and Will went with Lady Caroline Laſcelles and Captain Howard in a barouche and four, poſtilions and outriders all in gay liveries, ſpotleſs white leather pantaloons, and blue and ſilver coats and hats: We daſhed along over the green ſod, always in the park, ſtartling the deer, and driving often into the heart of the woods, which are numerous in this fine park. We all prayed for as fine a day for the morrow for the royal advent. The houſe looks magnificently in the ſunſhine, as you drive up to it!

Sunday evening.

Drive in the park.

Alas! it is always ſo in this country, the morrow has come, and a drenching rain, mortifying to all loyal ſubjects, and a great pity. A great awning has been raiſed for the Queen over the ſteps of the principal entrance. It is now five o'clock. In an hour the royal *cortége* will be here. There has been ſuch a fuſs all day. Everybody has been running about arranging and deranging, — ſome carrying chairs, ſome flower-pots, ſome pictures, ſome vaſes, &c., &c. Such a ſcampering! I help on with a kind word, and encourage the others, and eſpecially comfort my kind hoſt with aſſurances of the weather changing! Gas has been conducted into the great dome over the hall, and "God ſave the Queen" blazes out in fiery characters that illuminate the whole building.

Rain.

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Arrangements.

Such a quantity of fine things, beautiful flowers and fruits, have arrived to-day from the Ducheſs of Sutherland's place at Trentham, and from the Duke of Devonſhire's at Chatsworth! The Duke is brother to Lady Carliſle. A large band will play during dinner at one end of the long gallery, and the Duke of Devonſhire has ſent his band for muſic in the evening. We had our partners and places at table aſſigned us this morning. There will be eight or ten more men than women, thirty-ſix in all. I go in with Lady Caroline Laſcelles, and ſit next to Sir George Grey, the Cabinet Miniſter, — who accompanies the Queen, — next the Ducheſs of Sutherland, and next Lord Carliſle and the Queen. So you ſee I ſhall be very near her Majeſty, and, as the table is circular, I could not be better placed, — another inſtance of the kindneſs with which I have been treated.

Popular feeling.

A quantity of policemen have arrived on the ground before the houſe, as the royal train will be greeted by all the loyal people in the neighborhood, and a body of military are encamped near the houſe to keep order. There is ſuch a turn-out of coaches and four, with gay liveries and all. Plague on the weather! But it only drizzles now. The landſcape, however, looks dull, and wants the lights to give it effect.

Auguſt 28th, Wedneſday. — I have a little time to write before luncheon, and muſt ſend off the letter then to London to be copied. Received yours this morning, complaining I had not written by the laſt. You have got the explanation of it ſince. To reſume: The Queen, &c., arrived yeſterday in a pelting rain, with an eſcort of cavalry, — a pretty ſight to thoſe under cover. Crowds of loyal ſubjects were in the park in front of the houſe to greet her. They muſt have come miles in the rain. She came into the hall in a plain travelling-dreſs, bowing very gracefully to all there, and then to her apartments, which occupy the front of the building. At eight we went to dinner, all in full dreſs, but mourning for the Duke of Cambridge; I, of courſe, for Preſident Taylor! All wore breeches or tight pantaloons. It was a brilliant ſhow, I aſſure you, — that immenſe table, with its fruits and flowers, and lights glancing over beautiful plate, and in that ſuperb gallery. I was as near the Queen as at our own family table. She has a good appetite, and laughs merrily. She has fine eyes and teeth, but is ſhort. She was dreſſed in black ſilk and lace, with the blue ſcarf of the Order of the Garter acroſs her boſom. Her only ornaments were of jet. The Prince, who is certainly a handſome and very well-made man, wore the Garter with its brilliant buckle round his knee, a ſhowy ſtar on his breaſt, and the collar of a foreign order round his neck. Dinner went off very well, except that we had no muſic; a tribute to Louis-Philippe at the Queen's requeſt, — too bad![2] We drank the royal healths with prodigious enthuſiaſm.

Arrival of the Queen.

Dinner.

[2] Louis-Philippe died at Clermont, Monday, Auguſt 26th, 1850, and, as the Queen was on her way the next day to Caſtle Howard, the train was ſtopped, when paſſing near Clermont, long enough for Prince Albert to make a viſit of condolence to the ex-Queen. With all this freſh in their recollection, it was, I ſuppoſe, regarded as a conſiderate and graceful tribute to the affliction of the French family to requeſt that feſtive muſic might be omitted at the dinner.

After the ladies retired, the Prince and the other gentlemen remained half an hour, as usual. In the evening we listened to some fine music, and the Queen examined the pictures. Odd enough the etiquette. Lady Carlisle, who did the honors like a high-bred lady as she is, and the Duchess of Sutherland, were the only ladies who talked with her Majesty. Lord Carlisle, her host, was the only gentleman who did so, unless she addressed a person herself. No one can sit a moment when she chooses to stand. She did me the honor to come and talk with me, — asking me about my coming here, my stay in the Castle, what I was doing now in the historic way, how Everett was, and where he was, — for ten minutes or so; and Prince Albert afterwards a long while, talking about the houses and ruins in England, and the churches in Belgium, and the pictures in the room, and I don't know what. I found myself now and then trenching on the rules by interrupting, &c.; but I contrived to make it up by a respectful "Your Royal Highness," "Your Majesty," &c. I told the Queen of the pleasure I had in finding myself in a land of friends instead of foreigners, — a sort of stereotype with me, — and of my particular good fortune in being under the roof with her. She is certainly very much of a lady in her manner, with a sweet voice.

Evening and etiquette.

The house is filled with officials, domestics, &c. Over two hundred slept here last night. The grounds all round the house, as I write, are thronged with thousands of men and women, dressed in their best, from the adjacent parts of the country. You cannot stir out without seeing a line of heads through the iron railing or before the court-yard. I was walking in the garden this morning (did I tell you that it is a glorious day, luckily?) with the Marchioness of Douro, who was dressed in full mourning as a lady in waiting, when the crowd set up such a shout! as they took her for the Queen. But I must close. God bless you, dear!

William H. Prescott.

TO MRS. PRESCOTT.

London, September 5, 1850.

Dearest Wife,

I send you a few lines, my last from England, to bring up my history to as late a date as possible. I told you of the royal festivities at Castle Howard, and you will get still more particulars from the account in the "Illustrated News," which I hope you have provided yourself with. The Queen went off in royal state. In the evening after came off the ball, at which I danced three quadrilles and two country-dances, — the last two with the Duchess of Sutherland, — and it was four in the morning, when we wound up with the brave old dance of Sir Roger de Coverley. I spent a day longer at Castle Howard, driving about with Lady Mary Howard in her pony phaeton over the park to see her village pensioners. When I left early the next day, we had an affectionate leave-taking enough; I mean all of us together, and as I know it will please you to see how much heart the family have shown to me, I will enclose a note I received at

Castle Howard.

Ball.

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Trentham from old Lady Carliſle, and another from her granddaughter, the Ducheſs of Argyll. We all parted at the railway ſtation, and I ſhall never ſee them more!

From Caſtle Howard we proceeded to Trentham in Staffordſhire, the Ducheſs of Sutherland's favorite ſeat, and a ſplendid place it is. We met her at Derby, ſhe having ſet out the day before us. We both arrived too late for the train. So ſhe put poſt-horſes to her barouche, and ſhe and Lady Conſtance, a blooming Engliſh girl looking quite like Lizzie, and Will and I, poſted it for thirty-ſix miles, reaching Trentham at ten in the evening, — an open barouche and cool enough. But we took it merrily, as indeed we ſhould not have got on at all that night, if we had not had the good luck to fall in with her Grace.

Ducheſs of Sutherland.

Trentham.

Trentham is a beautiful place; the grounds laid out in the Italian ſtyle for an immenſe extent; the gardens with plots of flowers ſo curiouſly arranged that it looks like a fine painting, with a little lake ſtudded with iſlands at the end, and this encloſed by hills dark with foreſt-trees. Beſides theſe noble gardens, through which the Trent flows in a ſmooth current, there is an extenſive park, and the deer came under my windows in the morning as tame as pet lambs. The Ducheſs ſpent the former part of the afternoon in taking us round herſelf to all the different places, walking and ſometimes boating it on the Trent; for they extend over a great ſpace. The green-houſes, &c. are ſuperb, and filled with exquiſite flowers and fruit: and the drawing-rooms, of which there is a ſuite of ten or twelve, very large, open on a magnificent conſervatory, with marble floors, fountains, and a roof of glaſs, about five times as big as Mrs. R.'s, tell E. The rooms are filled with the choiceſt and moſt delicate works of art, painting, ſculpture, *bijouterie* of all kinds. It is the temple of Taſte, and its charming miſtreſs created it all. As I was coming away, ſhe asked me to walk with her into the garden, and led me to a ſpot where ſeveral men were at work having a great hole prepared. A large evergreen tree was held up by the gardener, and I was requeſted to help ſet it in the place and to throw ſome ſhovelfuls of earth on it. In fact, I was to leave an evergreen memorial, "which," ſaid ſhe, "my children ſhall ſee hereafter, and know by whom it was planted." She choſe to accompany us to the ſtation, and by the way took us to the great porcelain manufactory of Stoke, where ſhe gave Will a ſtatuette of the Prince of Wales, very pretty, and me an exquiſite little vaſe, which you will be ſo happy as to take care of under a glaſs cover. Her own rooms contain ſome beautiful ſpecimens of them. Is ſhe not a Ducheſs? She is, every inch of her; and what is better, a moſt warm-hearted, affectionate perſon, like all the reſt of the generous race of Howard. They always ſeem employed on ſomething. The Ducheſs of Argyll, I remember, was never unemployed, — reading, or working, or drawing, which ſhe does uncommonly well. The tenderneſs of the mother and daughter for each other is pleaſing enough. We came to be preſent at the chriſtening of the hope of the family, — Lord Stafford's firſt-born ſon. It took place in the church, which is attached to a wing of the manſion. The family occupied a gallery at the end of the chapel, and the ceremony was witneſſed by all the village.

Plants a tree.

The Howards.

Chriſtening.

I had intended to go to Lord Elleſmere's, agreeably to a general invitation, but

found that Lord and Lady Ellesmere were in Ireland, called there by the illness of a daughter. So we went to Chatsworth, the famous seat of the Duke of Devonshire. He is absent, but had written to the housekeeper to show us all the place, to have the fountains play, — one of which springs up two hundred feet or more, — and to prepare lunch for me. I found the servants prepared to receive us, and we passed several hours at his magnificent place, and fared as well as if its noble proprietor had been on the spot to welcome us. I shall, after a day here, go to Lady Theresa Lewis, at Lord Clarendon's place, then to Baron Parke's, Ampthill, for a day or two; then to the Marquis of Lansdowne's,[3] and then huzza for home! Pray for the good steamer Niagara; a good steamer, and a good captain, and I trust a good voyage.

Chatsworth.

Sept. 9th. — Just received yours and E.'s charming letters; — alas! by my blunder, (the last?) I was startled by mother's illness. Thank God all is right again. I could not afford to have anything happen to her while I am away.

Your affectionate husband,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

And so ended, in unbroken enjoyment, the most brilliant visit ever made to England by an American citizen not clothed with the *prestige* of official station.[4] That Mr. Prescott deeply felt the kindness he received — especially that of the Lyells, the Milmans, and "all the blood of all the Howards" — is plain from his letters, written in the confidence and simplicity of family affection. How much of this kindness is to be attributed to his personal character rather than to his reputation as an author, it is not easy to tell. But, whatever portion of it resulted from the intercourse and contact of society; whatever was

Tributes of kindness and affection.

[3] The visit to Lord Lansdowne's failed; but before he reached London he made a most agreeable one at Baron Parke's, now Lord Wensleydale.

[4] A whimsical proof that Mr. Prescott was a lion in London during his visit there may be found in the following note of the venerable Miss Berry, — Horace Walpole's Miss Berry, — with whom Dean Milman had invited Mr. Prescott and himself to dine, but, owing to Mr. P.'s engagements, he had been obliged to offer their visit above a fortnight ahead of the time when he proposed it.

MISS BERRY TO THE REV. MR. MILMAN.

June 20, 1850.

Having insured my life at more than one of the most respectable insurance-companies, I venture to accept of your most agreeable proposal for next Saturday fortnight! and shall rejoice to see you and Mrs. Milman accompanied by one whose works I have long admired, and to whose pen I am indebted for some of the liveliest interests and the most agreeable hours that can exist for an octogenarian, like your obliged and attached friend,

M. BERRY.

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won by his ſunny ſmile and cordial, unconſtrained ways, — he ſeemed to recognize without accurately meaſuring it, and by the finer inſtincts of his nature to appreciate it as ſomething more to be valued and deſired, than any tribute of admiration which might have become due to him from his works before he was perſonally known.

After he returned home, when the crowded life he had led for three or four months, with its pleaſures and excitements, was ſeen from a tranquil diſtance, he ſummed up the reſults of his viſit in the following paſſage, carefully recorded among his memoranda at the end of October, 1850.

Favorable view of Engliſh character.

On the whole, what I have ſeen raiſes my preconceived eſtimate of the Engliſh character. It is full of generous, true, and manly qualities; and I doubt if there ever was ſo high a ſtandard of morality in an ariſtocracy which has ſuch means for ſelf-indulgence at its command, and which occupies a poſition that ſecures it ſo much deference. In general, they do not ſeem to abuſe their great advantages. The reſpect for religion — at leaſt for the forms of it — is univerſal, and there are few, I imagine, of the great proprietors who are not more or leſs occupied with improving their eſtates, and with providing for the comfort of their tenantry, while many take a leading part in the great political movements of the time. There never was an ariſtocracy which combined ſo much practical knowledge and induſtry with the advantages of exalted rank.

In country life.

The Engliſhman is ſeen to moſt advantage in his country home. For he is conſtitutionally both domeſtic and rural in his habits. His fireſide and his farm, — theſe are the places in which one ſees his ſimple and warm-hearted nature moſt freely unfolded. There is a ſhyneſs in an Engliſhman, — a natural reſerve, — which makes him cold to ſtrangers, and difficult of approach. But once corner him in his own houſe, a frank and full expanſion will be given to his feelings, that we ſhould look for in vain in the colder Yankee, and a depth not to be found in the light and ſuperficial Frenchman, — speaking of nationalities, not individualities.

Rural taſtes and habits.

The Engliſhman is the moſt truly rural in his taſtes and habits of any people in the world. I am ſpeaking of the higher claſſes. The ariſtocracy of other countries affect the camp and the city. But the Engliſh love their old caſtles and country ſeats with a patriotic love. They are fond of country ſports. Every man ſhoots or hunts. No man is too old to be in the ſaddle ſome part of the day, and men of ſeventy years and more follow the hounds and take a five-barred gate at a leap. The women are good whips, are fond of horſes and dogs, and other animals. Ducheſſes have their cows, their poultry, their pigs, — all watched over and provided with accommodations of Dutch-like neatneſs. All this is characteriſtic of the people. It may be thought to detract

ſomething from the feminine graces which in other lands make a woman ſo amiably dependent as to be nearly imbecile. But it produces a healthy and blooming race of women to match the hardy Engliſhmen, — the fineſt development of the phyſical and moral nature which the world has witneſſed. For we are not to look on the Engliſh gentleman as a mere Nimrod. With all his reliſh for field ſports and country uſages, he has his houſe filled with collections of art and with extenſive libraries. The tables of the drawing-rooms are covered with the lateſt works sent down by the London publiſher. Every gueſt is provided with an apparatus for writing, and often a little library of books for his own amuſement. The Engliſh country-gentleman of the preſent day is anything but a Squire Weſtern, though he does retain all his reliſh for field ſports.

Diſagreeable parts of the Engliſh character.

The character of an Engliſhman, under this its moſt refined aſpect, has ſome diſagreeable points which jar unpleaſantly on the foreigner not accuſtomed to them. The conſciouſneſs of national ſuperiority, combined with natural feelings of independence, gives him an air of arrogance, though it muſt be owned that this is never betrayed in his own houſe, — I may almoſt ſay, in his own country. But abroad, where he ſeems to inſtitute a compariſon between himſelf and the people he is thrown with, it becomes ſo obvious that he is the moſt unpopular, not to ſay odious, perſon in the world. Even the open hand with which he diſpenſes his bounty will not atone for the violence he offers to national vanity.

There are other defects which are viſible even in his moſt favored circumſtances. Such is his bigotry, ſurpaſſing everything, in a quiet paſſive form, that has been witneſſed ſince the more active bigotry of the times of the Spaniſh Philips. Such, too, is the excluſive, limited range of his knowledge and conceptions of all political and ſocial topics and relations. The Engliſhman, the cultivated Engliſhman, has no ſtandard of excellence borrowed from mankind. His ſpeculation never travels beyond his own little — *great-little* — iſland. That is the world to him. True, he travels, ſhoots lions among the Hottentots, chaſes the grizzly bear over the Rocky Mountains, kills elephants in India and ſalmon on the coaſt of Labrador, comes home, and very likely makes a book. But the ſcope of his ideas does not ſeem to be enlarged by all this. The body travels, not the mind. And, however he may abuſe his own land, he returns home as hearty a John Bull, with all his prejudices and national taſtes as rooted as before. The Engliſh — the men of fortune — all travel. Yet how little ſympathy they ſhow for other people or inſtitutions, and how ſlight is the intereſt they take in them! They are iſlanders, cut off from the great world. But their iſland is, indeed, a world of its own. With all their faults, never has the ſun ſhone — if one may uſe the expreſſion in reference to England — on a more noble race, or one that has done more for the great intereſts of humanity.

Nobleneſs of the Engliſh character.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1850–1852.

Voyage Home. — Letters to Friends in England. — Begins to work again. — Pepperell. — "Philip the Second." — Correſpondence.

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Voyage home.

ON the 14th of September, Mr. Preſcott embarked at Liverpool, to return home, on board the Niagara, — the ſame good ſhip on which he had embarked for Europe nearly four months earlier at New York, and in which he now reached that metropolis again, after a fortunate paſſage of thirteen days. At Liverpool he ſtopped, as he did on his arrival there, at the hoſpitable houſe of his old friend Smith; and the laſt letter he wrote before he went on board the ſteamer, and the firſt he deſpatched back to England, after he was again fairly at home, were to Lady

Lyell, with whom and Sir Charles he had probably ſpent more hours in London than with anybody elſe, and to both of whom he owed unnumbered acts of kindneſs.

TO LADY LYELL.

Liverpool, September 13, 1850.

MY DEAR LADY LYELL,

I am now at Liverpool, or rather in the ſuburbs, at my friend's houſe. It is after midnight, but I cannot go to ſleep without bidding you and your huſband one more adieu. I reached here about five o'clock, and find there are ſeventy paſſengers; ſeveral ladies, or perſons that I hope are ſo, for they are not men. But I look for little comfort on the reſtleſs deep. I hope, however, for a fair offing. You will think of me ſometimes during the next fortnight, and how often ſhall I think of you, and your conſtant kindneſs to me! You ſee I am never tired of aſking for it, as I ſent you the troubleſome commiſſion of paying my debts before I left, and, I believe, did not ſend quite money enough. Heaven bleſs you! Farewell.

With kind remembrances to Sir Charles, believe me, my dear friend,

Moſt affectionately yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

Can you make out my hieroglyphics? [1]

TO LADY LYELL.

Boſton, September 30, 1850.

MY DEAR LADY LYELL,

I write you a line to tell you of my ſafe arrival on the other ſide of the great pond — I beg pardon — *lake*. We had a fair paſſage, conſidering the ſeaſon, ſome thumping and tumbling about and conſtant head-winds, but no very heavy gales, ſuch as fall due at the equinox. I was lucky enough to find a lady on board who was not ſick, and who was willing to read aloud; ſo the *ennui* of the voyage was wonderfully lightened by "Vanity Fair" and Mr. Cumming's lion-ſtories. I had the good fortune to find all well on returning, and the atmoſphere was lighted up with a ſunny light, ſuch as I never ſaw on the other ſide of the water, at leaſt during my preſent journey. I do not believe it will be as good for my eyes as the comfortable neutral tints of England, — merry England, not from its climate, however, but from the warm hearts of its people. God bleſs them! I have no time to think over matters now, buſy in the midſt of trunks and portmanteaus, ſome emptying, ſome filling, for our ſpeedy flight to Pepperell. But once in its welcome ſhades, I ſhall have much to think over, — of dear Voyage home.

[1] This letter was written with his noctograph.

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friends beyond the water. Yesterday, who should pop in upon me but Dr. Holland, fresh from Lake Superior. It seemed like an apparition from Brook Street, so soon and sudden. He and Everett and Ticknor will dine with me to-day, and we shall have a comfortable talk of things most agreeable to us all. Dr. H. sails in the "Canada" to-morrow. The grass does not grow under his feet. I sent Anna Ticknor yesterday the beautiful present, all in good order. She went down in the afternoon to her sea-nest, and her husband comes up to-day. Possibly she may come and dine with us too. She was right glad to see me, and had a thousand questions to ask; so I hope she will come and get answers to some of them to-day. To-morrow we flit, and a party of young people go along with us. So we shall not be melancholy. Adieu, my dear friend. Pray remember me most kindly to your husband and your family. My wife joins in loving remembrances to you, and desires to thank you for your kind note.

Sir Henry Holland.

Believe me, my dear Lady Lyell, here and everywhere,

Affectionately yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

Give my love to the Milmans, when they return. I shall write them from Pepperell.

Very soon he wrote to Dean Milman.

Pepperell, Mass., October 10, 1850.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have at length reached my native land, and am again in my country quarters, wandering over my old familiar hills, and watching the brilliant changes of the leaf in the forests of October, the finest of the American months. This rural quiet is very favorable for calling up the past, and many a friendly face on the other side of the water comes up before me, and none more frequently than yours and that of your dear wife.

Since I parted from you, I have been tolerably industrious. I first passed a week in Belgium, to get some acquaintance with the topography of the country I am to describe. It is a wonderful country certainly, — rich in its present abundance as well as in its beautiful monuments of art and its historic recollections. On my return to England, I went at once into the country, and spent six weeks at different places, where I saw English life under a totally new aspect. The country is certainly the true place in which to see the Englishman. It is there that his peculiar character seems to have the best field for its expansion; a life which calls out his energies physical as well as mental, the one almost as remarkable as the other.

Visit to Belgium.

The country life affords the opportunity for intimacy, which it is very difficult to have in London. There is a depth in the English character, and at the same time a constitutional reserve, sometimes amounting to shyness, which it requires some degree of intimacy to penetrate. As to the hospitality, it is quite equal to what we read of in semi-civilized countries, where the presence of a

Country life in England.

ſtranger is a boon inſtead of a burden. I could have continued to live in this agreeable way of life till the next meeting of Parliament, if I could have ſettled it with my conſcience to do ſo. As to the houſes, I think I ſaw ſome of the beſt places in England, in the North and in the South, with a very intereſting dip into the Highlands, and I truſt I have left ſome friends there that will not let the memory of me paſs away like a ſummer cloud. In particular, I have learned to comprehend what is meant by "the blood of the Howards," — a family in all its extent, as far as I have ſeen it, as noble in nature as in birth. . . . . .

I had a pretty good paſſage on my return, conſidering that it was the ſeaſon of equinoctial tempeſts. I was fortunate in finding that no trouble or ſorrow had come into the domeſtic circle ſince my departure, and my friends were pleaſed to find that I had brought home ſubſtantial proofs of Engliſh hoſpitality in the addition of ſome ten pounds' weight to my mortal part. By the by, Lord Carliſle told the Queen that I ſaid, "Inſtead of John Bull, the Engliſhman ſhould be called John Mutton, for he ate beef only one day in the week, and mutton the other ſix"; at which her Majeſty, who, ſtrange to ſay, never eats mutton herſelf, was pleaſed to laugh moſt graciouſly.

The day after I reached Boſton I was ſurpriſed by the apparition of my old neighbor, Dr. Holland, juſt returned from an excurſion to Lake Superior. It was as if a piece of Brook Street had parted from its moorings, and croſſed the water. We were in a tranſition ſtate, juſt flitting to the country, but I managed to have him, Everett, and Ticknor dine with me. So we had a pleaſant *partie carrée* to talk over our friends on the other ſide of the ſalt lake. What would I not give to have you and Mrs. Milman on this ſide of it. Perhaps you may have leiſure and curioſity ſome day, when the paſſage is reduced to a week, as it will be, to ſee the way of life of the American aborigines. If you do not, you will ſtill be here in the heart of one who can never forget the kindneſs and love he has experienced from you in a diſtant land.

Sir H. Holland.

Pray remember me moſt affectionately to Mrs. Milman, to whom I ſhall ſoon write, and believe me, my dear friend,

Very ſincerely yours,

W. H. PRESCOTT.

He found it ſomewhat difficult to ſettle down into regular habits of induſtry after his return home. But he did it. His firſt weeks were ſpent at Pepperell, where I recollect that I paſſed two or three merry days with him, when our common friend, Mr. Edward Twiſleton, who had been very kind to him in England, made him a viſit, and when the country was in all the gorgeous livery of a New England autumn.

Pepperell.

Hon. E. Twiſleton.

The ſubſequent winter, 1850–51, was ſpent as uſual, in Boſton. But his eyes were in a bad ſtate, and his interrup-

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Difficult to resume work.

tions so frequent, that he found it impossible to secure as many hours every day for work as he desired. He therefore was not satisfied with the results he obtained, and complained, as he often did, somewhat unreasonably, of the ill effects of a town life. Indeed, it was not until he made his *villeggiatura* at Pepperell, in the autumn of 1851, that he was content with himself and with what he was doing.

Finishes the first volume of "Philip the Second."

But from this time he worked in earnest. He made good resolutions and kept them with more exactness than he had commonly done; so that, by the middle of April, 1852, he had completed the first volume of his "Philip the Second," and was plunging with spirit into the second. I remember very well how heartily he enjoyed this period of uncommon activity.

Determines to write History, and not Memoirs.

It was at this time, and I think partly from the effect of his visit to England, that he changed his purpose concerning the character he should give to his "History of Philip the Second." When he left home he was quite decided that the work should be *Memoirs*. Soon after his return he began to talk to me doubtfully about it. His health was better, his courage higher. But he was always slow in making up his mind. He therefore went on some months longer, still really undetermined, and writing rather memoirs than history. At last, when he was finishing the first volume, and came to confront the great subject of the Rebellion of the Netherlands, he perceived clearly that the gravest form of history ought to be adopted.

"For some time after I had finished the 'Peru,'" he says, "I hesitated whether I should grapple with the whole subject of Philip *in extenso*; and when I had made up my mind to serve up the whole barbecue, instead of particular parts of it, I had so little confidence in the strength of my own vision, that I thought of calling the work 'Memoirs' and treating the subject in a more desultory and superficial manner than belongs to regular history. I did not go to work in a business-like style until I broke ground on the troubles of the Netherlands. Perhaps my critics may find this out."

I think they did not. Indeed, there was less occasion for it than the author himself supposed. The earlier portions of

The opening rather Memoirs.

the hiſtory, relating as they do to the abdication of Charles V. and the marriage of Philip with Mary of England, fell naturally into the tone of memoirs, and thus they make a more graceful veſtibule to the grand and grave events that were to follow than could otherwiſe have been arranged for them, while, at the ſame time, as he advanced into the body of his work and was called on to account for the war with France, and deſcribe the battles of St. Quentin and Gravelines, he, as it were, inevitably fell into the more ſerious tone of hiſtory, which had been ſo long familiar to him. The tranſition, therefore, was eaſy, and was beſides ſo appropriate, that I think a change of purpoſe was hardly detected. One effect of it, however, was ſoon perceptible to himſelf. He liked his work better, and carried it on with the ſort of intereſt which he always felt was important, not only to his happineſs, but to his ſucceſs.

From this time forward — that is, from the period of his return home — his correſpondence becomes more abundant. This was natural, and indeed inevitable. He had made acquaintances and friendſhips in England, which led to ſuch intercourſe, and the letters that followed from it ſhow the remainder of his life in a light clearer and more agreeable than it can be ſhown in any other way. Little remains, therefore, but to arrange them in their proper ſequence.

TO MR. FORD.

Pepperell, Maſs., U. S., October 12, 1850.

Here I am, my dear Ford, ſafe and ſound in my old country quarters, with leiſure to ſpeak a word or two to a friend on the other ſide of the Atlantic. I had a voyage of thirteen days, and pretty good weather for the moſt part, conſidering it was the month when I had a right to expect to be tumbled about rudely by the equinoctial gales. We *had* ſome rough gales, and my own company were too much damaged to do much for me. But angel woman, God bleſs her! always comes when ſhe is wanted, — and ſometimes when ſhe is not, — and I found one in a pretty little Yankee lady, who had the twofold qualifications of being ſalt-water-proof, and of being a good reader. So, thanks to her, I travelled through "Vanity Fair" for the ſecond time, and through Cumming's

Voyage home.

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African exploits, quite new to me. And ſo killing his lions helped me to kill my time; the worſt enemy of the two. It was with a light heart, however, that I deſcried the gray rocks of my native land again.

. . . . .

Pepperell.

I am now about forty miles from town, on my old family acres, which do not go back to the time of the Norman conqueſt, though they do to that of the Aborigines, which is antiquity for a country where there are no entails and the ſon ſeldom ſits under the ſhadow of the trees that his father planted. It is a plain New England farm, but I am attached to it, for it is connected with the earlieſt recollections of my childhood, and the mountains that hem it round look at me with old familiar faces. I have had too many friends to greet me here to have as much time as I could wiſh to myſelf, but as I wander through my old haunts, I think of the paſt ſummer, and many a friendly countenance on the other ſide of the water comes before me. Then I think of the pleaſant hours I have had with you, my dear Ford, and of your many kindneſſes, not to be forgotten; of our merry Whitebait feed with John Murray, at Royal Greenwich, which you are to immortalize one day, you know, in the "Quarterly,"

Whitebait dinner.

"So ſavage and tartarly."

Lockhart and Stirling.

And that calls to mind that prince of good fellows, Stirling, and the laſt agreeable little dinner we three had together at Lockhart's. Pray remember me moſt kindly to the great Ariſtarch and to Stirling. That was not my final parting with the latter worthy, for he did me the favor to ſmoke me into the little hours the morning before I left London for my country campaign. And I had the pleaſure of a parting breakfaſt with you, too, in Brook Street, as you may recall, on my return. God bleſs you both! Some day or other I ſhall expect to ſee you twain on this ſide of the great ſalt lake, if it is only to hunt the grizzly bear, of which amiable ſport John Bull will, no doubt, become very fond when Cumming has killed all the lions and camelopards of the Hottentot country.

In about a fortnight I ſhall leave my naked woods for the town, and then for the *Cóſas de Eſpaña*. And when I am fairly in harneſs, I do not mean to think of anything elſe; not even of my cockney friends in the great-little iſle. If there is any way in which I can poſſibly be of uſe to you in the New World, you will not fail to tell me of it with all frankneſs. Pray remember me moſt kindly to your daughters.

Y mande ſiempre ſu amigo quien le quiere de todo corazon

Y. S. M. B.

GUILLERMO H. PRESCOTT.

TO THE EARL OF CARLISLE.

Boſton, November 12, 1850.

MY DEAR CARLISLE,

Allſton's Sketches.

I have the pleaſure of ſending you Allſton's Sketches, of which I ſpoke to you. They are the firſt draughts of ſome of his beſt pictures; among them the

"Uriel," which the Ducheſs of Sutherland has at Trentham. Generally, however, they have remained mere ſketches which the artiſt never worked up into regular pictures. They have been much eſteemed by the critics here as fine ſtudies, and the execution of this work was intruſted to two of our beſt engravers. One of them is excellent with crayons;[2] quite equal to Richmond in the portraits of women. . . . . .

I now and then get a reminder of the land of roaſt mutton by the ſight of ſome one or other of your countrymen who emerges from the ſteamers that arrive here every fortnight. We are, indeed, one family. Did I ever repeat to you Allſton's beautiful lines, one ſtanza of the three which he wrote on the ſubject? *Les voilà!* Allſton's poetry.

> "While the manners, while the arts,
> That mould a nation's ſoul,
> Still cling around our hearts,
> Between let ocean roll,
> Our joint communion breaking with the ſun,
> Yet ſtill from either beach
> The voice of blood ſhall reach,
> More audible than ſpeech:
> 'We are *one*.'"

Is it not good? . . . . .

Farewell, my dear friend. I think of you mixed up with Caſtle Howard and brave old Naworth, and many a pleaſant recollection.

Once more, *mio caro, addio.*

Always thine,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

FROM MR. LOCKHART.

MY DEAR MR. PRESCOTT,

Your baſket of canvas-backs arrived here a day after your note, and the contents thereof proved to be in quite as good condition as they could have been if ſhot three days before in Leiceſterſhire. I may ſay I had never before taſted the dainty, and that I think it entirely merits its reputation; but on this laſt head, I preſume the *ipſe dixit* of Maſter Ford is "a voice double as any duke's." Canvas-back ducks.

Very many thanks for your kind recollections. I had had very pleaſing accounts of you and other friends from Holland on his return from his rapid expedition. He declares that, except the friends, he found everything ſo changed, that your country ſeemed to call for a viſit once in five years, and Changes in the United States.

[2] Cheney.

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gallant is he in his reſolution to invade you again in 1855. I wiſh I could muſter leiſure or pluck, or both, for ſuch an adventure. Let me hope meanwhile that long ere '55 we may again ſee you and Everett and Ticknor here, where ſurely you muſt all feel very tolerably *at home*.

Believe me always very ſincerely yours,

J. G. LOCKHART.

December 27, 1850.

TO THE EARL OF CARLISLE.

Boſton, January 14, 1851.

MY DEAR CARLISLE,

"Illuſtrious Americans."

I have the pleaſure of ſending you by this ſteamer a work of which I happen to have two copies, containing the portraits of ſome dozen Yankee notabilities, which may perhaps intereſt you. The likeneſſes, taken from daguerrotypes, are ſometimes frightfully, odiouſly like. But ſome of the heads, as thoſe of Taylor, our preſent Preſident, beſides being true, are not unpleaſing likeneſſes. The biographical ſketches are written for the moſt part, as you will ſee, in the Ercles vein. My effigy was taken in New York, about an hour before I ſailed for England, when I had rather a rueful and lackadaiſical aſpect. The biographical notice of me is better done than moſt of them, in point of literary execution, being written by our friend Ticknor.

Lord Carliſle's Lectures.

Pray thank your brother Charles for his kindneſs in ſending me out the reports of your Lectures. I, as well as the reſt of your friends here, and many more that know you not, have read them with great pleaſure, and, I truſt, edification. The diſſertation on your travels has been reprinted all over the country, and, as far as I know, with entire commendation. Indeed, it would be churliſh enough to take exception at the very liberal and charitable tone of criticiſm which pervades it. If you are not blind to our defects, it gives much higher value to your approbation, and you are no niggard of that, certainly. Even your reflections on the *black* plague will not be taken amiſs by the South, ſince they are of that abſtract kind which can hardly be conteſted, while you do not paſs judgment on the peculiar difficulties of our poſition, which conſiderably diſturbs the general queſtion. Your remarks on me went to my heart. They were juſt what I would wiſh you to have ſaid, and, as I know they came from your heart, I will not thank you for them. On the whole, you have ſet an excellent example, which, I truſt, will be followed by others of your order. But few will have it in their power to do good as widely as you have done, ſince there are very few whoſe remarks will be read as extenſively, and with the ſame avidity, on both ſides of the water.

TO THE EARL OF CARLISLE.

Boſton, U. S., January 27, 1851.

MY DEAR CARLISLE,

I wrote you from the country that, when I returned to town, I ſhould loſe no time in endeavoring to look up a good painting of the Falls of Niagara. I have not neglected this; but, though I found it eaſy enough to get paintings of the grand cataract, I have not till lately been able to meet with what I wanted. I will tell you how this came about. When Bulwer, your Miniſter, was here, I aſked him, as he has a good taſte in the arts, to ſee if he could meet with any good picture of Niagara while he was in New York. Some time after, he wrote me that he had met with "a very beautiful picture of the Falls, by a Frenchman." It ſo happened, that I had ſeen this ſame picture much commended in the New York papers, and I found that the artiſt's name was Lebron, a perſon of whom I happened to know ſomething, as a letter from the Viſcount Santarem, in Paris, commended him to me as a "very diſtinguiſhed artiſt," but the note arriving laſt ſummer, while I was abſent, I had never ſeen Mr. Lebron. I requeſted my friend, Mr. ——, of New York, on whoſe judgment I place more reliance than on that of any other connoiſſeur whom I know, and who has himſelf a very pretty collection of pictures, to write me his opinion of the work. He fully confirmed Bulwer's report; and I accordingly bought the picture, which is now in my own houſe.

Picture of the Falls of Niagara.

It is about five feet by three and a half, and exhibits, which is the moſt difficult thing, an entire view of the Falls, both on the Canada and American ſide. The great difficulty to overcome is the milky ſhallowneſs of the waters, where the foam diminiſhes ſo much the apparent height of the cataract. I think you will agree that the artiſt has managed this very well. In the diſtance a black thunder-ſtorm is burſting over Goat Iſland and the American Falls. A ſteam boat, "The Maid of the Miſt," which has been plying for ſome years on the river below, forms an object by which the eye can meaſure, in ſome degree, the ſtupendous proportions of the cataract. On the edge of the Horſeſhoe Fall is the fragment of a ferry-boat which, more than a year ſince, was waſhed down to the brink of the precipice, and has been there detained until within a week, when, I ſee by the papers, it has been carried over into the abyſs. I mention theſe little incidents that you may underſtand them, being ſomething different from what you ſaw when you were at Niagara; and perhaps you may recognize ſome change in the form of the Table-Rock itſelf, ſome tons of which, carrying away a carriage and horſes ſtanding on it at the time, ſlipped into the gulf a year or more ſince.

Difficulties of ſubject.

I ſhall ſend the painting out by the "Canada," February 12th, being the firſt ſteamer which leaves this port for Liverpool, and, as I have been rather unlucky in ſome of my conſignments, I think it will be as ſafe to addreſs the box at once to you, and it will await your order at Liverpool, where it will probably arrive the latter part of February.

I ſhall be much diſappointed if it does not pleaſe you well enough to hang upon your walls as a faithful repreſentation of the great cataract; and I truſt

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you will gratify me by accepting it as a *ſouvenir* of your friend acroſs the water. I aſſure you it pleaſes me much to think there is anything I can ſend you from this quarter of the world which will give you pleaſure. . . . . .

Pray remember me moſt affectionately to your mother and ſiſter, who, I ſuppoſe, are now in town with you.

And believe me, deareſt Carliſle,

Ever faithfully yours,

W. H. PRESCOTT.

TO THE EARL OF CARLISLE.

Boſton, May 29, 1851.

MY DEAR CARLISLE,

. . . . . .

I am off in a couple of days for the great cataract. I like to refreſh my recollections of it every few years by a viſit in perſon; and I have a pleaſant party to accompany me. I wiſh you were one of them. How I ſhould like to ſtroll through the woods of Goat Iſland with you, my dear Carliſle, and talk over the pleaſant paſt, made ſo pleaſant the laſt year by you and yours. By the by, the Duke of Argyll ſent me an Addreſs which he made ſome time ſince at Glaſgow, in which he made the kindeſt mention of me. It was a very ſenſible diſcourſe, and I think it would be well for the country if more of the ariſtocracy were to follow the example, which you and he have ſet, of addreſſing the people on other topics beſides thoſe of a political or agricultural nature, — the two great hobbies of John Bull.

Addreſs of the Duke of Argyll.

So you perceive Sumner is elected after twenty ballotings. His poſition will be a difficult one. He repreſents a coalition of the Democratic and Free-Soil parties, who have little relation to one another. And in the Senate the particular doctrine which he avows finds no favor. I believe it will prove a bed filled more with thorns than with roſes. I had a long talk with him yeſterday, and I think he feels it himſelf. It is to his credit that he has not committed himſelf by any conceſſions to ſecure his election. The difficulty with Sumner as a ſtateſman is, that he aims at the greateſt abſtract good inſtead of the greateſt good practicable. By ſuch a policy he miſſes even this lower mark; not a low one either for a philanthropiſt and a patriot.

Mr. Sumner's election to the Senate of the United States.

You and your friends ſtill continue to manage the ſhip notwithſtanding the rough ſeas you have had to encounter. I ſhould think it muſt be a perplexing office until your parties aſſume ſome more determinate character, ſo as to throw a decided ſupport into the government ſcale.

Engliſh politics.

Pray remember me moſt affectionately to your mother and to Lady Mary, and to the Ducheſs of Sutherland, whom I ſuppoſe you ſee often, and believe me, my dear Carliſle,

Always moſt affectionately your friend,

W. H. PRESCOTT.

TO MRS. MILMAN.

Boſton, February 16, 1852.

How kind it was in you, my dear Mrs. Milman, to write me ſuch a good letter, and I am afraid you will think little deſerved by me. But if I have not written, it is not that I have not thought often of the happy days I have paſſed in your ſociety and in that of my good friend the Dean, — God bleſs you both! You congratulated me on the engagement of my daughter.[3] It is a ſatisfactory circumſtance for us every way; and the character of the *fiancé* is ſuch, I believe, as to promiſe as much happineſs to the union as one could expect. Yet it is a hard thing to part with a daughter, — an only daughter, — the light of one's home and one's heart. The boys go off, as a thing of courſe; for man is a migratory animal. But a woman ſeems part of the houſehold fixtures. Yet a little reflection makes us feel that a good connection is far better than ſingle bleſſedneſs, eſpecially in our country, where matrimony is the deſtiny of ſo nearly all, that the few exceptions to it are in rather a lonely and anomalous poſition.

Engagement of Miſs Preſcott.

. . . . . .

What a delightful tour you muſt have had in Italy! It reminds me of wandering over the ſame ſunny land, five and thirty years ago, — a prodigious reminiſcence. It is one of the charms of your ſituation that you have but to croſs a narrow ſtrait of ſome twenty miles to find yourſelf tranſported to a region as unlike your own as the moon, — and, to ſay truth, a good deal more unlike. This laſt *coup d'état* ſhows, as Scriblerus ſays,

Italy.

"None but themſelves can be their parallel."

. . . . . .

I am very glad to learn from your letter that the Dean is making good progreſs in the continuation of his noble work. I have always thought it very creditable to the government that it has beſtowed its church dignities on one ſo liberal and tolerant as your huſband. I do not think that the royal patronage always dares to honor thoſe in the Church, whom the world moſt honors.

Dean Milman's Hiſtory of Latin Chriſtianity.

Have you ſeen Macaulay of late? He told me that he ſhould not probably make his bow to the public again before 1853. It ſeems that his conjecture was not wrong, the falſe newſpapers notwithſtanding. But one learns not to believe a thing, for the reason that it is affirmed in the newſpapers. Our former Miniſter, Bancroft, has a volume in the preſs, a continuation of his American hiſtory, which will ſerve as a counterpart to Lord Mahon's, exhibiting the other ſide of the tapeſtry.

Macaulay.

Bancroft.

I hope hiſtory is in poſſeſſion of all the feuds that will ever take place between the two kindred nations. In how amiable a way the correſpondence about the Prometheus has been conducted by Lord Granville! John Bull can afford to make apology when he is in the wrong. The preſent ſtate of things in Europe ſhould rather tend to draw the only two great nations where conſtitutional liberty exiſts more cloſely together.

England and the United States.

[3] His only daughter to Mr. James Lawrence, eldeſt ſon of Mr. Abbott Lawrence, who was then Miniſter of the United States in London.

Hallam.

I am very glad that our friend Mr. Hallam is to have the satisfaction of seeing his daughter so well married. He has had many hard blows, and this ray of sunshine will, I hope, light up his domestic hearth for the evening of life. Pray present my congratulations most sincerely to him and Miss Hallam.

. . . . .

Miss Prescott's marriage.

We are now beginning to be busy with preparations for my daughter's approaching nuptials, which will take place, probably, in about a month, if some Paris toggery, furniture, &c., as indispensable as a bridegroom or a priest, it seems, come in due time. The affair makes a merry stir in our circle, in the way of festive parties, balls, and dinners. But in truth there is a little weight lies at the bottom of my heart when I think that the seat at her own board is to be forever vacant. Yet it is but a migration to the next street. How can parents consent to a match that places an ocean betwixt them and their children?

But I must bring my prosy talk to a close. I feel, now that I have my pen in hand, that I am by your side, with your husband and your family, and our friends the Lyells; or perhaps rambling over the grounds of royal Windsor, or through dark passages in the Tower, or the pleasant haunts of Richmond Hill; at the genial table of the charming lady "who came out in Queen Anne's day," or many other places with which your memory and your husband's, your kindly countenances and delightful talk, are all associated. When I lay my head on my pillow, the forms of the dear friends gather round me, and sometimes I have the good luck to see them in midnight visions, — and I wake up and find it all a dream.

Pray remember me most kindly to the Dean and your sons, and to Lady Lyell, whom, I suppose, you often see, and believe me, my dear Mrs. Milman,

Always most affectionately yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO THE EARL OF CARLISLE.

Boston, April 7, 1852.

DEAREST CARLISLE,

Lawrence wrote me a little while since that you remarked you could now say for once that I was in your debt. It may be so; but I wonder if I have not given you two to one, or some such odds. But no matter; in friendship, as in love, an exact tally is not to be demanded.

English politics.

Since I had last the pleasure of hearing from you, there has been a great revolution in your affairs, and the *ins* have become *outs*. Is it not an awkward thing to be obliged to face about, and take just the opposite tacks; to be always on the attack instead of the defence! What a change! First to break with your Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was in so much glory, fighting the battle so stoutly when I was in London! And then to break up altogether, and surrender the field to the Protectionists! We are most of us protectionists, more

or leſs, in my part of the country, with which doctrines I found very little ſympathy when I was in England. I wonder if that policy can poſſibly get the upper hand again with you. The *revocare gradum* is always a difficult ſtep, more difficult than any two forward. Can the preſent Cabinet poſſibly ſtand on one leg, and that the lame one of protection? We at the North have long been trying to get the ſcale of duties raiſed, but in vain. *Nil retrorſum.* What hot work you will have in the coming election! It would be almoſt worth a voyage to ſee. Yet I doubt if any candidate will ſpend a hundred thouſand upon it, as was the caſe, I believe, in your own county not many years ago.

Sumner. Sumner has not been anxious to make a display in Congreſs. In this he has judged well. The ſeſſion has been a tame one, ſo far. He made a ſhort ſpeech on the Koſſuth buſineſs, and a very good one; — ſince that, a more elaborate effort on the diſtribution of our wild lands, ſo as to favor the new, unſettled States. According to our way of thinking, he was not ſo ſucceſsful here. I ſuppoſe he provides you with his parliamentary eloquence. We are expecting Koſſuth here before long. I am glad he takes us laſt. I ſhould be ſorry that we ſhould get into a ſcrape by any ill-adviſed enthuſiaſm. He has been preaching up doctrines of intervention (called by him non-intervention) by no means ſuited to our policy, which, as our poſition affords us the means of keeping aloof, ſhould be to waſh our hands of all the troubles of the Old World.

Koſſuth.

What troubles you are having now, in France eſpecially. But revolution is the condition of a Frenchman's exiſtence apparently. Can that country long endure the preſent ſtate of things, — the days of Auguſtus Cæſar over again?

Bancroft. Have you ſeen Bancroft's new volume? I think this volume, which has his characteriſtic merits and defects, ſhowy, ſketchy, and full of bold ſpeculations, will have intereſt for you.

Lord Mahon. Lord Mahon is on the ſame field, ſurveying it from an oppoſite point of view. So we are likely to have the American Revolution well diſſected by able writers on oppoſite ſides at the ſame time. The reſult will probably be doubt upon everything.

Sparks. In the newſpaper of to-day is a letter, to be followed by two others, addreſſed to Bryant, the poet-editor of the New York "Evening Poſt," from Sparks, himſelf the editor of Waſhington's papers. I think you muſt have known Sparks here. He is now the Preſident of Harvard Univerſity, the poſt occupied by Everett after his return. Sparks has been ſharply handled for the corruption of the original text of Waſhington, as appeared by compariſons of ſome of the originals with his printed copy. Lord Mahon, among others, has ſome ſevere ſtrictures on him in his laſt volume. Sparks's letters are in vindication of himſelf, on the ground that the alterations are merely verbal, to correct bad grammar and obvious blunders, which Waſhington would have corrected himſelf, had he prepared his correſpondence for the preſs. He makes out a fair caſe for himſelf, and any one who knows the integrity of Sparks will give him credit for what he ſtates. As he has ſome reflections upon Lord Mahon's raſh criticiſm, as he terms it, I doubt not he will ſend him a copy, or I would do it, as I think he would like to ſee the explanation.

Macaulay. I ſuppoſe you breakfaſt ſometimes with Macaulay, and that he dines ſome-

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times with you. I wiſh I could be with you at both. I ſuppoſe he is buſy on his new volume. When will the new brace be bagged? I remember he propheſied to me not before 1853, and I was very glad to hear from him, that his great ſucceſs did not make him hurry over that hiſtoric ground. A year or two extra is well ſpent on a work deſtined to live forever.

And now, my dear friend, I do not know that there is anything here that I can tell you of that will much intereſt you. I am *poddering* over my book; ſtill *Philippizing*. But "it is a far cry to Loch Awe"; which place, far as it is, by the-by, I ſaw on my laſt viſit to Europe under ſuch delightful auſpices, with the Lord of the Campbells and his lovely lady, God preſerve them! I have been quite induſtrious, for me, this winter, in ſpite of hymeneal merry-making, and am now on my ſecond volume. But it is a terrible ſubject, ſo large and diffuſe, — the ſtory of Europe. I told Bentley to ſend Lady Mary a copy of my "Miſcellanies" two months ſince, which contains an engraved portrait of me from a picture by Phillips, painted when in London for Mr. Stirling. The engraving is a good one; better, I ſuſpect, than the likeneſs. . . . . .

You will think, by the length of my yarn, that I really think you are returned to private life again, and have nothing in the world to do. But a hoſt of pleaſant recollections gather round me while I converſe with you acroſs the waters, and I do not like to break the ſpell. But it is time. I muſt not cloſe without thanking you for the kind congratulations which you ſent me ſome weeks ſince on my daughter's approaching nuptials. It is all over now, and I am childleſs, and yet fortunate, if it muſt be ſo. Does not your ſiſter the Ducheſs part with her laſt unmarried daughter very ſoon? The man is fortunate, indeed, who is to have ſuch a bride. Pray ſay all that is kind for me to the Ducheſs, whoſe kindneſs to me is among the moſt cheriſhed of my recollections in my pleaſant viſit to merry England.

Farewell, dear Carliſle. Believe me always

Affectionately yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boſton, April 18, 1852.

MY DEAR LADY LYELL,

Since I laſt wrote, we have had another wedding in my family, as you have no doubt heard. Indeed, you prove how well you are poſted up about us, and the kind part you take in our happineſs, by the little *ſouvenir* which you ſent to Lizzy at the time of the marriage.[4] We like to have the ſympathy of thoſe who are dear to us in our joys and our ſorrows. I am ſure we ſhall always have yours in both, though I hope it will be long before we have to draw on it for the latter. Yet when did the ſun ſhine long without a cloud, — lucky, if

[4] The marriage of his only daughter to Mr. Lawrence, already mentioned.

Mrs. Prescott, senior.

without a tempest. We have had one cloud in our domestic circle the last fortnight, in the state of my mother's health. She was confined to the house this spring by an injury, in itself not important, to her leg. But the inaction, to which she is so little accustomed, has been followed by loss of strength, and she does not rally as I wish she did. Should summer ever bless us, of which I have my doubts, I trust she will regain the ground she has lost. But I guess and fear! Eighty-five is a heavy load; hard to rise under. It is like the old man in the Arabian Nights, that poor Sinbad could not shake off from his shoulders. Elizabeth's marriage has given occasion to a good deal of merry-making, and our little society has been quite astir, in spite of Lent. Indeed, the only Fast-day which the wicked Unitarians keep is that appointed by the Governor as the "day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer." It comes always in April. We keep it so appropriately, that I could not help remarking the other day, that it would be a pity to have it abolished, as we have so few *fête* days in our country.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1852.

Political Opinions. — Correſpondence with Mr. Bancroft, Mr. Everett, and Mr. Sumner. — Converſation on Political Subjects.

CHAP. XXIV.

Political opinions.

OF Mr. Preſcott's political opinions there is little to be ſaid. That he was ſincerely and faithfully attached to his country — to his whole country — nobody ever doubted who heard him ſpeak on the ſubject. His letters when he was in England, flattered as few men have been by Engliſh hoſpitality, are as explicit on this point as was the expreſſion of his every-day feelings and thoughts at home. But, with all his patriotic loyalty, he took little intereſt in the paſſing quarrels of the political parties that, at different times, divided and agitated the country. They were a

diſturbing element in the quiet, earneſt purſuit of his ſtudies; and ſuch elements, whatever they might be, or whenceſoever they might come, he always rejected with a peculiar ſenſitiveneſs; anxious, under all circumſtances, to maintain the even, happy ſtate of mind to which his nature ſeemed to entitle him, and which he found important to continuous work. He was wont to ſay, that he dealt with political diſcuſſions only when they related to events and perſons at leaſt two centuries old.

Political friends.

Of friends who were eminent in political affairs he had not a few; but his regard for them did not reſt on political grounds. With Mr. Everett, whom he knew early during his college life, and who, as Secretary of State, repreſented the old Whig party, he had always the moſt kindly intercourſe, and received from him, as we have ſeen, while that gentleman was reſiding in Italy in 1840 and 1841, and ſubſequently while he ſo ably repreſented the United States as our Miniſter in London, efficient aſſiſtance in collecting materials for the "Hiſtory of Philip the Second." With Mr. Bancroft, who had an inherited claim on his regard, and whom he knew much from 1822, he ſtood in relations ſomewhat more intimate and familiar, and always maintained them, though he never ſympathized with his friend in the decidedly democratical tendencies that have marked his brilliant career as a ſtateſman. With Mr. Sumner his perſonal acquaintance began later, — not till the return of that gentleman from Europe in 1840; but, from the firſt, it was cordial, and in the laſt two or three years of his life he took much intereſt in the queſtions that aroſe about Kanſas, and voted for Mr. Fremont as Preſident in preference to either of the other candidates. During his whole life, however, he belonged eſſentially, both in his political feelings and in his political opinions, as his father always did, to the conſervative ſchool of Waſhington and Hamilton, as its doctrines are recorded and developed in the "Federaliſt."

With the three eminent men juſt referred to, whom all will recognize as marking with the luſtre of their names the oppo-

CHAP. XXIV. Correſpondence. 1831–1856.

ſite corners of the equilateral triangle formed by the three great political parties that at different times during Mr. Preſcott's life preponderated in the country, he had a correſpondence, ſometimes interrupted by the changing circumſtances of their reſpective poſitions, but always kindly and intereſting. The political queſtions of the day appeared in it, of courſe, occaſionally. But whenever this occurred, it was rather by accident than otherwiſe. The friendſhip of the parties had been built on other foundations, and always reſted on them ſafely.

The earlieſt letters to Mr. Bancroft that I have ſeen are two or three between 1824 and 1828; but they are unimportant for any purpoſes of biography. The next one is of 1831, and is addreſſed to Northampton, Maſſachuſetts, where Mr. Bancroft then lived.

TO MR. BANCROFT.

Boſton, April 30, 1831.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We jog on in much the ſame way here, and, as we are none of us Jackſonists, care little for the upſetting of cabinets, or any other mad pranks, which doubtleſs keep you awake at Northampton, for I perceive you are doing as many a miſguided man has done before you, quitting the ſweets of letters for the thorny path of politics. I muſt ſay I had rather drill Greek and Latin into little boys all my life, than take up with this trade in our country. However, ſo does not think Mr. ——, nor Mr. ——, nor Mr. &c., &c., &c., who are much better qualified to carry off all the prizes in literature than I can be. Your article on the Bank of the United States produced quite a ſenſation, and a conſiderable contrariety of opinion.[1] Where will you break out next? I did not think to ſee you turn out a financier in your old age! I have juſt recovered from a fit of ſickneſs, which has confined me to my bed for a fortnight. I think the weather will confine me to the houſe another fortnight. Do you mean to make a flying trip to our latitudes this vacation? We ſhould be glad to ſee you. In the mean time I muſt beg you to commend me to your wife, and believe me,

Political life.

Moſt affectionately your friend,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

[1] An article in the "North American Review," by Mr. Bancroft.

TO MR. BANCROFT.

Pepperell, October 4, 1837.

MY DEAR BANCROFT,

. . . . . .

Since we returned here, I have run through your ſecond volume with much pleaſure.[2] I had ſome miſgivings that the ſucceſs of the firſt,[3] and ſtill more that your political hobbyiſm, might have made you, if not careleſs, at leaſt leſs elaborate. But I ſee no ſymptoms of it. On the contrary, you have devoted apparently ample inveſtigation to all the great topics of intereſt. The part you have deſcanted on leſs copiouſly than I had anticipated — perhaps from what I had heard you ſay yourſelf — was the character and habits of the Aborigines; but I don't know that you have not given as ample ſpace to them — conſidering, after all, they are but incidental to the main ſubject — as your canvas would allow.[4] You certainly have contrived to keep the reader wide awake, which, conſidering that the ſummary nature of the work neceſſarily excluded the intereſt derived from a regular and circumſtantial narrative, is a great thing. As you have ſucceeded ſo well in this reſpect, in the comparatively barren parts of the ſubject, you cannot fail as you draw nearer our own times.

Mr. Bancroft's Hiſtory.

. . . . . .

I ſee you are figuring on the Van Buren Committee for concocting a public addreſs. Why do you coquet with ſuch a troubleſome termagant as politics, when the glorious Muſe of Hiſtory opens her arms to receive you? I can't ſay I comprehend the faſcination of ſuch a miſtreſs; for which, I ſuppoſe, you will commiſerate me.

Political life.

Well, I am juſt ready to fly from my perch, in the form of three ponderous octavos. Don't you think there will be a great eagerneſs to pay ſeven dollars and a half for an auld warld's tale of the fifteenth century, in theſe rub-and-go times?[5] You are more fortunate than I, for all who have bought your firſt, will neceſſarily buy the ſecond volume; as ſubſcribers to a railroad are obliged to go on deeper and deeper with the creation of new ſtock, in order to make the old of any value, as I have found by precious experience. Nevertheleſs, I ſhall take the field in December, *Deo volente*, all being in readineſs now for ſtriking off, except the paper.

. . . . . .

With the ſincere hope that your family continue in health, and that you may be bleſſed yourſelf with good health and reſtored ſpirits, I am

Ever truly yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

[2] Then juſt publiſhed.

[3] Publiſhed in 1834.

[4] The ſketch of the Indians was reſerved for Mr. Bancroft's third volume, and was, in fact, made with a great deal of care.

[5] There were heavy financial troubles in the winter of 1837–8.

TO MR. BANCROFT.

Saturday P. M. (indorſed May 5, 1838.)

DEAR BANCROFT,

A review of "Ferdinand and Iſabella."

I return the review with my hearty thanks.[6] I think it is one of the moſt delightful tributes ever paid by friendſhip to authorſhip. And I think it is written in your very happieſt manner. I do not believe, in eſtimating it ſo, I am miſled by the ſubject, or the writer, for I have not been very eaſy to pleaſe on the ſcore of puffs, of which I have had full meaſure, you know, from my good-natured friends. But the ſtyle of the piece is gorgeous, without being overloaded, and the tone of ſentiment moſt original, without the leaſt approach to extravagance or obſcurity. Indeed, the originality of the thoughts and the topics touched on conſtitute its great charm, and make the article, even at this eleventh hour, when ſo much has been ſaid on the ſubject, have all the freſhneſs of novelty. In this I confeſs, conſidering how long it had been kept on the ſhelf, I am moſt agreeably diſappointed. As to the length, it is, taken in connection with the ſort of critique, juſt the thing. It will terrify none from venturing on it, and I am ſure a man muſt be without reliſh for the beautiful, who can lay it down without finiſhing.

Faithfully yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

P. S. There is one thing which I had like to have forgotten, but which I ſhall not forgive. You have the effrontery to ſpeak of my having paſſed the prime of life, ſome dozen years ago. Why, my youthful friend, do you know what the prime of life is? Molière ſhall tell you: "Hé bien! qu'eſt ce que cela, ſoixante ans? C'eſt la fleur de l'âge cela." Prime of life, indeed! People will think the author is turned of ſeventy. He was a more diſcreet critic that called me "young and *modeſt*"!

TO MR. BANCROFT.

Thurſday morning, November 1, 1838.

DEAR BANCROFT,

Thomas Carlyle.

I return you Carlyle with my thanks. I have read as much of him as I could ſtand. After a very candid deſire to reliſh him, I muſt ſay I do not at all. I think he has proceeded on a wrong principle altogether. The French Revolution is a moſt lamentable comedy (as Nick Bottom ſays) of itſelf, and requires nothing but the ſimpleſt ſtatement of facts to freeze one's blood. To attempt to color ſo highly what nature has already overcolored is, it appears to me, in

[6] The article in the "Democratic Review," by Mr. Bancroft, on the "Ferdinand and Iſabella." It has been noticed *ante*, p. 110.

very bad taſte, and produces a groteſque and ludicrous effect, the very oppoſite of the ſublime or beautiful. Then ſuch ridiculous affectations of new-fangled words! Carlyle is even a bungler at his own buſineſs; for his creations, or rather combinations, in this way, are the moſt diſcordant and awkward poſſible. As he runs altogether for dramatic, or rather pictureſque effect, he is not to be challenged, I ſuppoſe, for want of original views. This forms no part of his plan. His views certainly, as far as I can eſtimate them, are trite enough. And, in ſhort, the whole thing, in my humble opinion, both as to *forme* and to *fond*, is perfectly contemptible. Two or three of his articles in the Reviews are written in a much better manner, and with elevation of thought, if not with originality. But affectation,

"The trail of the ſerpent is over them all."

Mercy on us, you will ſay, what have I done to bring ſuch a ſhower of twaddle about my ears? Indeed, it is a poor return for your kindneſs in lending me the work, and will diſcourage you in future, no doubt. But to ſay truth, I have an idle hour; my books are putting up.[7]

Thierry I will keep longer, with your leave. He ſays "he has made friends with darkneſs." There are we brothers.

Faithfully yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO MR. SUMNER.[8]

Boſton, April 18, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,

Our friend Hillard[9] read to me, yeſterday, ſome extracts from a recent letter of yours, in which you ſpeak of your interviews with Mr. Ford,[10] who is to wield the ſcalping-knife over my bantling in the "Quarterly." I cannot refrain from thanking you for your very efficient kindneſs towards me in this inſtance, as well as for the very friendly manner in which you have enabled me to become acquainted with the ſtate of opinion on the literary merits of my Hiſtory in London. It is, indeed, a rare piece of good fortune to be thus put in poſſeſſion of the critical judgments of the moſt cultivated ſociety, who ſpeak our native language. Such information cannot be gathered from Reviews and Magazines, which put on a ſort of ſhow dreſs for the public, and which are very often, too,

7 For moving to town.

8 Mr. Sumner was then in Europe, and Mr. Preſcott was not yet perſonally acquainted with him.

9 George S. Hillard, Eſq., author of the charming book, "Six Months in Italy," firſt printed in 1853 in Boſton, and ſubſequently in London, by Murray, ſince which it has become a ſort of manual for travellers who viſit Florence and Rome.

10 Already noticed for his review in the "London Quarterly" of "Ferdinand and Iſabella," and for his ſubſequent perſonal friendſhip with Mr. Preſcott.

CHAP. XXIV. Correſpondence. 1831 – 1856.

executed by inferior hands. Through my friend Ticknor, firſt, and ſubſequently through you, I have had all the light I could deſire; and I can have no doubt, that to the good-natured offices of both of you I am indebted for thoſe *preſtiges* in my favor, which go a good way towards ultimate ſucceſs. I may truly ſay, that this ſucceſs has not been half ſo grateful to my feelings as the kind ſympathy and good-will which the publication has drawn forth from my countrymen, both at home and abroad.

Good-will valued more than literary ſucceſs.

. . . . . .

Touching the "Quarterly," . . . . . I had half a mind, when I learned from your letters that it was to take up "Ferdinand and Iſabella," to ſend out the laſt American edition, for the uſe of the reviewer (who, to judge from his papers in the "Quarterly," has a quick ſcent for blemiſhes, and a very good knowledge of the Spaniſh ground), as it contains more than a hundred corrections of inadvertencies and blunders, chiefly verbal, in the firſt edition. It would be hard, indeed, to be damned for ſins repented of; but, on the whole, I could not make up my mind to do it, as it looked ſomething like a ſop to Cerberus; and ſo I determined to leave their Catholic Highneſſes to their fate. Thanks to your friendly interpoſition, I have no doubt, this will be better than they deſerve; and, ſhould it be otherwiſe, I ſhall feel equally indebted to you. Any one who has ever had a hand in concocting an article for a periodical knows *quantum valet*. But the *οἱ πολλοί* know nothing about it, and of all journals the "Edinburgh" and the "Quarterly" have the moſt weight with the American, as with the Engliſh public.

You are now, I underſtand, on your way to Italy, after a campaign more brilliant, I ſuſpect, than was ever achieved by any of your countrymen before. You have, indeed, read a page of ſocial life ſuch as few anywhere have acceſs to; for your hours have been paſſed with the great, not merely with thoſe born to greatneſs, but thoſe who have earned it for themſelves,

"Colla penna e colla ſpada."

Marquis Gino Capponi.

In your progreſs through Italy, it is probable you may meet with a Florentine nobleman, the Marquis Capponi.[11] Mr. Ellis,[12] in a letter from Rome, informed me, that he was diſpoſed to tranſlate "Ferdinand and Iſabella" into the Italian; and at his ſuggeſtion I had a copy forwarded to him from England, and have alſo ſent a Yankee one, as more free from inaccuracies. I only fear he may think it preſumptuous. He had never ſeen the book, and I can eaſily divine fifty reaſons why he would not chooſe to plague himſelf with the job of tranſlating when he has ſeen it. He is a man of great conſideration, and probably fully occupied in other ways. But after the intimation which was given me, I did not chooſe to be deficient on my part; and I only hope he may underſtand, that I do not flatter myſelf with the belief that he will do anything

[11] The Marquis Gino Capponi. See *ante*, p. 186, note.

[12] Rev. Dr. George E. Ellis, of Charleſtown, Maſs.

more than take that ſort of intereſt in the work which, as one of the leading *ſavans* in Italy, I ſhould wiſh him to feel for it. I am ſincerely deſirous to have the work known to Continental ſcholars who take an intereſt in hiſtorical inquiries. I ſhall be obliged to you if you will ſay this much to him, ſhould you fall in with him.

I ſhall be further obliged to you, ſhould you return to London, if you will, before leaving it for the laſt time, aſcertain from Bentley whether he is making arrangements for another edition, and in what ſtyle. I ſhould be ſorry to have the work brought out in an inferior dreſs, for the ſake of the *tocher*. Above all, he muſt get a rich portrait, *coute que coute*, of my heroine. I have written him to this effect, and he has promiſed it, but "it is a far cry to Loch Awe," and, when a man's publiſher is three thouſand miles off, he will go his own gait. I believe, however, he is diſpoſed to do very fairly by me. Thus you ſee my gratitude for the paſt anſwers the Frenchman's definition of it, a lively ſenſe of favors to come. I ſhall truſt, however, without heſitation, to the ſame friendly ſpirit which you have hitherto ſhown for my excuſe in your eyes.

Adieu, my dear ſir. With ſincere wiſhes that the remainder of your pilgrimage may prove as pleaſant and profitable to you as the paſt muſt have been, I am (if you will allow me to ſubſcribe myſelf)

Very truly your obliged friend and ſervant,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO MR. EVERETT.[13]

Boſton, May 21, 1840.

MY DEAR MR. EVERETT,

I encloſe a note to Mr. Grahame,[14] who is now reſiding at Nantes for the benefit of his daughter's health, who, as Mr. Ellis informs me, is married to a ſon of Sir John Herſchel.

Touching the kind offices I wiſh from you in Paris, it is ſimply to aſcertain if the Archives (the Foreign Archives, I think they are called) under the care of Mignet contain documents relating to Spaniſh hiſtory during the reign of Philip the Second. A Mr. Turnbull,[15] who, I ſee, is now publiſhing his obſervations on this country and the Weſt Indies, aſſured me laſt year, that the French government under Bonaparte cauſed the papers, or many of them, relating to this period, to be transferred from Simancas to the office in Paris. Mr. Turnbull has ſpent ſome time both in Madrid and Paris, and ought to know. If they are

Archives in Paris.

[13] Mr. Everett was then about embarking for Europe.

[14] J. Grahame, Eſq., author of the Hiſtory of the United States.

[15] D. Turnbull, Eſq., who publiſhed a book on Cuba, &c., in 1840.

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there, I should like to know if I can obtain copies of such as I should have occasion for, and I shall be obliged by your advising me how this can best be done. I shall not attempt to make a collection, which will require similar operations in the principal capitals of Europe, till I have learnt whether I can succeed in getting what is now in Spain, which must be, after all, the principal *dépôt*. My success in the Mexican collection affords a good augury, but I fear the disordered condition of the Spanish archives will make it very difficult. In the Mexican affair, the collections had been all made by their own scholars, and I obtained access to them through the Academy. For the "Philip the Second" I must deal with the government. There is no hurry, you know, so that I beg you will take your own time and convenience for ascertaining the state of the case.

Lecture on Peru.

I return you the Lecture on Peru, in which you have filled up the outlines of your first. Both have been read by me with much pleasure and profit; though it must be some years before I shall work in those mines myself, as I must win the capital of Montezuma first.

I pray you to offer my wife's and my own best wishes to Mrs. Everett, and with the sincere hope that you may have nothing but sunny skies and hours during your pilgrimage, believe me, my dear Mr. Everett,

Most truly and faithfully yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

FROM MR. EVERETT.

Paris, July 27, 1840.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have lost no time in instituting inquiries as to the documents which may be accessible in Paris, on the subject of Philip the Second. My first recourse was to M. Mignet. He is the keeper of the Archives in the Department of Foreign Affairs. From him I learned that his department contains nothing older than the seventeenth century. I learned, however, from him, that Napoleon, as Mr. Turnbull informed you, caused not only a part, but the whole, of the archives of Simancas to be transferred to Paris. On the downfall of the Empire, everything was sent back to Spain, excepting the documents relating to the History of France, which, somehow or other, remained. These documents are deposited in the *Archives du Royaume, Hôtel Soubise*. Among them is the correspondence of the successive Ministers of Spain in France with their government at Madrid. These papers are often the originals; they are not bound, nor indexed, but tied up in *liasses*, and M. Mignet represented the labor of examining them as very great. He showed me some of the bundles, which he had been permitted to borrow from the *Archives du Royaume*, but I did not perceive wherein the peculiar difficulty of examining them consisted. He has examined and made extracts from a great mass of these documents for the

Archives du Royaume, Paris.

Hiſtory of the Reformation which he is writing. He ſhowed me a large number of manuſcript volumes, containing theſe extracts, which he had cauſed to be made by four copyiſts. He had alſo ſimilar collections from Bruſſels, Caſſel, and Dreſden, obtained through the agency of the French Miniſters at thoſe places. I have made an arrangement to go to the *Archives du Royaume* next week, and ſee theſe documents. I think M. Mignet told me there were nearly three hundred bundles, and, if I miſtake not, all conſiſting of the correſpondence of the Miniſters of Spain in France.

Bibliothèque Royale.

My next inquiry was at the *Bibliothèque Royale*.[16] The manuſcripts there are under the care of an excellent old friend of mine, Profeſſor Haſe, who, in the ſingle viſit I have as yet made to the library, did everything in his power to facilitate my inquiry. In this ſuperb collection will, I think, be found materials of equal importance to thoſe contained in the *Archives du Royaume*. A very conſiderable part of the correſpondence of the French Miniſters at Madrid and Bruſſels, for the period of your inquiry, is preſerved, — perhaps all; and there are ſeveral miſcellaneous pieces of great intereſt if I may judge by the titles.

. . . . .

FROM MR. EVERETT.

Paris, Auguſt 22, 1840.

MY DEAR SIR,

MSS. from Simancas.

Since my former letter to you, I have made ſome further reſearches, on the ſubject of materials for the Hiſtory of Philip the Second. I paſſed a morning at the *Archives du Royaume*, in the ancient *Hôtel Soubiſe*, inquiring into the ſubject of the archives of Simancas; and in an interview with M. Mignet, he was good enough to place in my hands a report made to him, by ſome one employed by him, to examine minutely into the character and amount of theſe precious documents. They conſiſt of two hundred and eighty-four bundles, as I informed you in my former letter, and ſome of theſe bundles contain above a couple of hundred pieces. They are tied up and numbered, according to ſome ſyſtem of Spaniſh arrangement, the key of which (if there ever was any) is loſt. They do not appear to follow any order, either chronological, alphabetical, or that of ſubjects; and an ill-written, but pretty minute catalogue of ſome of the firſt bundles in the ſeries is the only guide to their contents. M. Mignet's amanuenſis went through the whole maſs, and looked at each ſeparate paper; and this, I think, is the only way in which a perfectly ſatisfactory knowledge of the contents of the collection can be obtained. I had time only to look at two bundles. I took them at a venture, being *Liaſſes* A 55 and A 56; ſelecting them, becauſe I ſaw in the above-named catalogue that they contained papers which fell within the period of the reign of Philip the Second. I ſoon diſcovered that theſe documents

[16] Now the *Bibliothèque Impériale*.

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Correſpondence. 1831-1856.

Letters of Philip the Second.

were far from being confined to the correſpondence of the Spaniſh Miniſters in France. On the contrary, I believe, not a paper of that deſcription was contained in the bundles I looked at. There were, however, a great number of original letters of Philip himſelf to his foreign Miniſters. They appeared in ſome caſes to be original draughts, ſometimes corrected in his own handwriting. Sometimes they were evidently the official copies, originally made for the purpoſe of being preſerved in the archives of the Spaniſh government. In one caſe, a deſpatch, apparently prepared for tranſmiſſion, and ſigned by Philip, but for ſome reaſon not ſent, was preſerved with the official copy. In ſome caſes there were letters in ſeveral different ſtates, from a firſt draught, through one or two corrected forms, till the letter was reduced to a ſatisfactory condition. This was ſtrikingly the caſe with the Latin letter to Elizabeth of England, of 23d Auguſt, 1581, warmly expoſtulating againſt the reception of Portugueſe fugitives, and particularly Don Antonio, and threatening war if his wiſhes were not complied with. Further reflection, perhaps, convinced Philip, that this kind of logic was not the beſt adapted to perſuade Queen Elizabeth, and a draught of another letter, *minus* the threat, is found in the bundle. Of ſome of the letters of Philip I could not form a ſatisfactory idea whether they were originals or copies, and if the latter, in what ſtage prepared. Thoſe of this claſs had an indorſement, purporting that they were "in cipher," in whole or in part. Whether they were deciphered copies of originals in cipher, or whether the indorſement alluded to was a direction to have them put in cipher, I could not tell. It is, in fact, a point of no great importance, though of ſome curioſity in the literary hiſtory of the materials.

Intereſting character of the letters.

Beſides letters of Philip, there are official documents and reports of almoſt every deſcription; and I ſhould think, from what I ſaw of the contents of the collection, that they conſiſt of the official papers emanating from and entering the private cabinet of the king, and filed away, the firſt in an authentic copy, the laſt in the original, from day to day. The letters of Philip, though not in his handwriting, were evidently written under his dictation; and I confeſs, the curſory inſpection I was able to give them ſomewhat changed my notion of his character. I ſuppoſed he left the mechanical details of government to his Miniſters, but theſe papers exhibit ample proof that he himſelf read and anſwered the letters of his ambaſſadors. Whether, however, this was the regular official correſpondence with the foreign Miniſters, or a private correſpondence kept up by the King, of which his Secretaries of State were uninformed, I do not know; but from indications, which I will not take up your time in detailing, I ſhould think the former. Among the papers is a holograph letter of Francis the Firſt to the wife of Charles the Fifth, after the treaty of Madrid, by which he recovered his liberty. They told me, at the Archives, that no obſtacles exiſted to copying theſe documents, and that it would be eaſy to find perſons competent to examine and tranſcribe them.

TO MR. EVERETT.

Nahant, September 1, 1840.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received your letter of the 27th of July, and it was certainly very kind of you to be willing to bury yourſelf in a muſty heap of parchments ſo ſoon after your arrival in the moſt brilliant and captivating of European capitals. I ſhould have aſked it from no one, and ſhould have been ſurpriſed at it in almoſt any other perſon. Your memoranda ſhow that, as I had anticipated, a large ſtore of original materials for Philip the Second's reign is in the public libraries there; poſſibly enough to authorize me to undertake the hiſtory without other reſources, though ſtill I cannot but ſuppoſe that the Spaniſh archives muſt contain much of paramount importance not exiſting elſewhere. I have received from Middleton this very week a letter, informing me that he and Dr. Lembke, my agent in Madrid, have been promiſed the ſupport of ſeveral members of government and influential perſons in making the inveſtigations there. By a paper, however, which he ſends me from the *archivero* of Simancas, I fear, from the multitude and diſorderly ſtate of the papers, there will be great embarraſſment in accompliſhing my purpoſe. I wrote ſome months ſince to Dr. Lembke, — who is a German ſcholar, very reſpectable, and a member of the Spaniſh Academy, and who has ſelected my documents for the "Conqueſt of Mexico," — that, if I could get acceſs to the Madrid libraries for the "Philip the Second" documents, I ſhould wiſh to complete the collection by the manuſcripts from Paris, and ſhould like to have him take charge of it. It ſo happens, as I find by the letter received from Middleton, that Lembke is now in Paris, and is making reſearches relating to Philip the Second's reign. This is an odd circumſtance. Lembke tells him (Middleton) he has found many, and has ſelected ſome to be copied, and that he thinks he ſhall "be able to obtain Mignet's permiſſion to have ſuch documents as are uſeful to me copied from his great collection."

Archives of Simancas.

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TO MR. EVERETT.

Boſton, February 1, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR,

I muſt thank you for your obliging letter of November 27th, in which you gave me ſome account of your diſaſters by the floods, and, worſe, from illneſs of your children. I truſt the laſt is diſſipated entirely under the ſunny ſkies of Florence. How the very thought of that fair city calls up the paſt, and bruſhes away the miſts of a quarter of a century! For nearly that time has elapſed ſince I wandered a boy on the banks of the Arno.

Florence.

Here all is fleet and "floſh," and in-doors talk of changes, political not meteorological, when the *ins* are to turn *outs*. There is ſome perplexity about a Senator to Congreſs, much increaſed by your abſence and J. Q. Adams's preſ-

Politics in the United States.

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ence. Abbott Lawrence, who was a prominent candidate, has now withdrawn. It seems more fitting, indeed, that he should represent us in the House than the Senate. Both Choate [17] and Dexter [18] have been applied to, and declined. But it is now understood that Mr. C. will consent to go. The sacrifice is great for one who gives up the best practice, perhaps, in the Commonwealth.

If you remain abroad, I trust, for the credit of the country, it will be in some official station, which is so often given away to unworthy partisans. There is no part of our arrangements, probably, which lowers us so much in foreign estimation, as the incompetence, in one way or another, of our representatives abroad.

Marquis Gino Capponi.

I have received the books from the Marquis Capponi of which he spoke to you, and also a very kind letter informing me of the arrangements for the translation of the Catholic Kings into the beautiful tongue of Petrarch and Dante. I see, from the Prospectus which he sends me, that I am much honored by the company of the translated. The whole scheme is a magnificent one, and, if it can be carried through, cannot fail to have a great influence on the Italians, by introducing them to modes of thinking very different from their own. I suppose, however, the censorship still holds its shears. It looks as if the change so long desired in the copyright laws was to be brought about, or the Associates could hardly expect indemnification for their great expenses. Signor Capponi is, I believe, a person of high accomplishments, and social as well as literary eminence. In my reply to him, I have expressed my satisfaction that he should have seen you, and taken the liberty to notice the position you have occupied in your own country; though it may seem ridiculous, or at least superfluous, from me, as it is probable he knows it from many other sources.

Relazioni Veneti.

I am much obliged by your communication respecting the "Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti." It is a most important work, and I have a copy, sent me by Mariotti. The subsequent volumes (only three are now published) will cover the reign of Philip the Second and supply most authentic materials for his history, and I must take care to provide myself with them.[19] When you visit Rome, if you have any leisure, I shall be obliged by your ascertaining if there are documents in the Vatican germane to this subject. Philip was so good a son of the Church, that I think there must be. Should you visit Naples, and meet with an old gentleman there, Count Camaldoli, pray present my sincere respects to him. He has done me many kind offices, and is now interesting himself in getting some documents from the archives of the Duke of Monte Leone, the representative of Cortés, who lives, or vegetates, in Sicily.

The Vatican.

Count Camaldoli.

Lembke is now in Paris, and at work for me. Sparks is also there, as you know, I suppose. He has found out some rich depositis of manuscripts relating

[17] The Hon. Rufus Choate.

[18] The Hon. Franklin Dexter, Mr. Prescott's brother-in-law.

[19] The "Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti," published by Professor Eugenio Albèri, of Florence, — a scholar whose learning fits him singularly for the task. The first volume was published in 1839, and I think the fifteenth and last has recently appeared. Meantime Signor Albèri has edited, with excellent skill, the works of Galileo, in sixteen volumes, 1842–1856. He assisted Mr. Prescott in other ways.

to Philip, in the Britiſh Muſeum. The difficulty will be, I fear, in the *embarras de richeſſes*. The politics of Spain in that reign were mixed up with thoſe of every court in Europe. Iſabel's were fortunately confined to Italy and the Peninſula.

I pray you to remember us all kindly to your wife, and to believe me, my dear Mr. Everett,

Moſt truly your obliged friend,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

FROM MR. EVERETT.

Florence, September 21, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR,

I duly received your favor of the 30th of April. I delayed anſwering it till I ſhould have executed your commiſſions, which, upon the whole, I have done to my ſatisfaction. I immediately addreſſed a note to the Marquis Gino Capponi, embodying the ſubſtance of what you ſay on the ſubject of his offer to furniſh you with copies of his "Venetian Relations." He was then abſent on a journey to Munich, which I did not know at the time. He has ſince returned, but I have not ſeen him. Since the loſs of his ſight, he leads a very ſecluded life, and is, I think, rarely ſeen but at M. Vieuſſeux's Thurſday-evening *Converſaziones;* which, as I have been in the country all ſummer, I have not attended. I infer from not hearing from him, that he thinks the "Relazioni" will be publiſhed within five years, and that conſequently it will not be worth while to have them tranſcribed. But I ſhall endeavor to ſee him before my departure. The Count Pietro Guicciardini readily placed in my hands the manuſcripts mentioned by you in yours of the 30th of April, which I have had copied at a moderate rate of compenſation. They form two hundred pages of the common-ſized foolſcap paper, with a broad margin, but otherwiſe economically written, the lines near each other, and the hand quite cloſe, though very legible. I accidentally fell upon copies of two autograph letters of Philip the Second, — the one to the Pope, the other to the Queen of Portugal, — on the ſubject of the impriſonment of Don Carlos, while I was in ſearch of ſomething elſe in the Magliabecchian. They are not intrinſically very intereſting. But, conſidering the author and the ſubject, as they are ſhort, each two pages, I had them copied. I experienced conſiderable difficulty in getting the document in the "Archivio Mediceo" copied. For cauſes which I could not ſatisfactorily trace, the moſt weariſome delays were interpoſed at every ſtep, and I deſpaired for ſome time of ſucceſs. The Grand Duke, to whom I applied in perſon, referred the matter, with reaſon, to the Miniſter. The Miniſter was deſirous of obliging me, but felt it neceſſary to take the opinion of the Official Superintendent of the department, who happens to be the Attorney-General, who is always buſy with other matters. He referred it to the Chief Archiviſt, and he to the Chief

Marquis Gino Capponi.

Count Pietro Guicciardini.

Autograph letters of Philip the Second.

Difficulty of obtaining copies.

Clerk. Fortunately the *Archivio* is quite near my uſual places of reſort; and, by putting them in mind of the matter frequently, I got it, after ſix weeks, into a form in which the Miniſter, Prince Corſini, felt warranted in giving a peremptory order in my favor.

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FROM MR. EVERETT.

London, April 30, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have to thank you for your letter of the 27th March, which I have juſt received, and I am afraid that of the 29th December, which you ſent me by Mr. Gayangos, is alſo ſtill to be acknowledged. After playing bo-peep with that gentleman all winter, I requeſted him to give me the favor of his company at breakfaſt to-day. I had Mr. Hallam and Lord Mahon, who has been in Spain, with other friends, to meet him, and found him an exceedingly pleaſant, intelligent perſon. I hope to ſee more of him during the ſummer, which he paſſes here.

Don Paſcual de Gayangos.

Mr. Rich ſent me the other day a copy of the third edition of your book, for which I am truly obliged to you. I find your Hiſtory wherever I go, and there is no American topic which is oftener alluded to in all the circles which I frequent, whether literary or faſhionable. It is a matter of general regret that you are underſtood to paſs over the reign of Charles the Fifth in your plans for the future. Mr. Deniſon expreſſed himſelf very ſtrongly to that effect the other day, and, though everybody does juſtice to the motive as a feeling on your part, I muſt ſay that I have not converſed with a ſingle perſon who thinks you ought to conſider the ground as preoccupied by Robertſon. He was avowedly ignorant of all the German ſources, had but partial acceſs to the Spaniſh authorities, and wrote hiſtory in a manner which does not ſatisfy the requirements of the preſent day.

Robertſon's "Charles the Fifth."

I am glad you are not diſappointed in the manuſcripts I procured you at Florence. The account of the Tuſcan Miniſter at Madrid is of courſe to be read with ſome allowance for the ſtrong diſpoſition he would have to ſee everything in the moſt favorable light, in conſequence of his maſter's deſire to conciliate the favor of Philip the Second. The contents of the Archives of Simancas, which M. de Gayangos will get you at Paris, whatever they may do for the moral character of Philip, will throw new light on his prodigious capacity for buſineſs. The conduct of the affairs of his mighty empire ſeems to have centred in his own perſon. . . . . .

Philip the Second.

Pray remember my wife and myſelf moſt kindly to your parents and Mrs. Preſcott, and believe me ever moſt faithfully yours,

EDWARD EVERETT.

TO MR. SUMNER.

Pepperell, September 11, 1842.

Many thanks for your kind propoſition, my dear Sumner. My wife's *veto* is not the only one to be deprecated in the matter.[20] You forgot the *Conquiſtador*, Cortés, a much more inexorable perſonage. He will not grant me a furlough for a ſingle day. In truth, ague, company, and the terrible *tranſition* week [21] — a word of horror — have ſo eaten into my time of late, that I muſt buckle on harneſs now in good earneſt. I don't know anything that would pleaſe me better than the trip to New York with you, except, indeed, to ſhake hands once more with Morpeth. But that pleaſure I muſt forego. I ſhall trouble you, however, with a note to him, and will ſend it to you by the 20th. If you ſhould leave before that, let me know, as I will not fail to write to him. He muſt be quite aboriginal by this time.[22] Pray get all the particulars of his tour out of him. Lord Morpeth.

Here I am in the midſt of green fields and miſty mountains, abſolutely revelling in the luxury of ruſtic ſolitude and ſtudy. Long may it be before I ſhall be driven back to the *fumum ſtrepitumque Romæ*.[23]

Remember me kindly to Lieber and Hillard, and believe me

Ever faithfully yours,

Wm. H. Prescott.

TO MR. SUMNER.

Pepperell, October 4, 1842.

I am truly obliged to you, my dear Sumner, for giving me the *carte du pays* of the laſt week ſo faithfully. Why, what a week you had of it! You celebrated our noble friend's departure [24] in as jolly a ſtyle as any Highlander or ſon of green Erin ever did that of his friend's to the world of ſpirits, — a perpetual wake, — wake, indeed, for you don't ſeem to have cloſed your eyes night or day. Dinners, breakfaſts, ſuppers, "each hue," as Byron ſays, "ſtill lovelier than the laſt." I am glad he went off under ſuch good auſpices, — New York hoſpi- Lord Morpeth in New York.

[20] To viſit New York with Mr. Sumner, in order to take leave of Lord Morpeth, then about to embark for England.

[21] Moving from Pepperell to Boſton, always annoying to him.

[22] Lord Morpeth had viſited ſome of our North American Indians.

[23] This quotation, comparing Boſton with Rome in its days of glory, reminds one irreſiſtibly of the words of Virgil's ſhepherd: —

"Urbem quam dicunt Romam, Melibœe putavi,
Stultus ego, huic noſtræ ſimilem."

[24] Lord Morpeth's embarkation for England.

tality, and you to share it with him. Well, peace to his *manes!* I never expect to see another peer or commoner from the *vater-land* whom I shall *cotton to*, as Madam B—— says, half so much.

I am pegging away at the Aztecs, and should win the mural crown in three months, were I to stay in these rural solitudes, where the only break is the plague of letter-writing. But Boston; the word comprehends more impediments, more friends, more enemies, — alas! how alike, — than one could tell on his fingers. *Addio!* love to Hillard, and, when you write, to Longfellow, whom I hope Lord M. will see, and believe me

Very affectionately yours,

Wm. H. Prescott.

TO MR. EVERETT.

Boston, November 29, 1843.

My dear Sir,

Death of Mr. Everett's daughter.

It was very kind in you to write to me by the last steamer, when you were suffering under the heavy affliction with which Providence has seen fit to visit you.[25] I believe there can scarcely be an affliction greater than that caused by such a domestic loss as yours; so many dear ties broken, so many fond hopes crushed. There is something in the relation of a daughter with a mind so ripe and a soul so spotless as yours, which is peculiarly touching, and more so perhaps to a father's heart than to any other. There is something in a female character that awakens a more tender sympathy than we can feel for those of our own sex, — at least, I have so felt it in this relation. I once was called to endure a similar misfortune. But the daughter whom I lost was taken away in the dawn of life, when only four years old. Do you remember those exquisite lines of Coleridge, —

Death of Mr. Prescott's daughter.

"Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
Death came with timely care,
The opening bud to heaven conveyed,
And bade it blossom there."

I think I can never know a sorrow greater than I then experienced.

And yet, if such was the blow to me, what must this be to you, where promise has ripened into so beautiful a reality. You have, indeed, all the consolation that can be afforded by the recollection of so delightful a character, and of a life that seems to have been spent in preparation for a glorious future. Now that she is gone, all who knew her — and there are many here — bear testimony to her remarkable endowments, and the surpassing loveliness of her disposition. If any argument were needed, the existence and extinction here of such a being

Consolations.

[25] The death of his eldest daughter, — singularly fitted to gratify affection and to excite a just pride in her parents.

would of itſelf be enough to eſtabliſh the immortality of the ſoul. It would ſeem as reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the bloſſom, with its curious organization and its tendencies to a fuller development, ſhould be deſigned to periſh in this immature ſtate, as that ſuch a ſoul, with the germ of ſuch celeſtial excellence within it, ſhould not be deſtined for a further and more noble expanſion. It is the conviction of this immortality which makes the preſent life dwindle to a point, and makes one feel that death, come when it will, ſeparates us but a ſhort ſpace from the dear friend who has gone before us. Were it not for this conviction of immortality, life, ſhort as it is, would be much too long. But I am poorly qualified to give conſolation to you. Would that I could do it!

Mr. Preſcott, ſenior.

You will be gratified to know that my father, of whoſe illneſs I gave you ſome account in my laſt, has continued to improve, and, as he continues to get as much exerciſe as the weather of the ſeaſon will permit, there is little doubt his health will be re-eſtabliſhed.

Before this, you will have received a copy of the "Conqueſt of Mexico" from Rich, I truſt. When you have leiſure and inclination to look into it, I hope it may have ſome intereſt for you. You ſay I need not fear the critical brotherhood. I have no great reſpect for them in the main, but eſpecially none for the lighter craft, who, I ſuſpect, ſhape their courſe much by the *trade*-winds. But the American public defer ſtill too much to the leading journals. I ſay, too much, for any one who has done that ſort of work underſtands its value. One can hardly imagine that one critic can look another ſoberly in the face. Yet their influence makes their award of ſome importance, — not on the ultimate fate of a work, for I believe that, as none but the author can write himſelf up *permanently*, ſo none other can write him down. But for preſent ſucceſs the opinion of the leading journals is of moment.

Reviews.

My parents and wife join with me in the expreſſion of the warmeſt ſympathy for Mrs. Everett, with which believe me, my dear Mr. Everett,

Moſt faithfully yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO MR. SUMNER.

Fitful Head, Auguſt 21, 1844.

MY DEAR SUMNER,

. . . . . .

Mr. Sumner's recovery.

I am delighted that you are turning a cold ſhoulder to Æſculapius, Galen, and *tutti quanti*. I deteſt the whole brotherhood. I have always obſerved that the longer a man remains in their hands, and the more of their curſed ſtuff he takes, the worſe plight he is in. They are the bills I moſt grudge paying, except the bill of mortality, which is very often, indeed, ſent in at the ſame time.

Beau Brummell.

I have been looking through Beau Brummell. His life was the triumph of

impudence. His complete success shows that a fond mother should petition for her darling this one best gift, *da, Jupiter, impudence;* and that includes all the rest, wit, honor, wealth, beauty, &c., or rather is worth them all. An indifferent commentary on English high life!

Present of a cane.

Did I tell you of a pretty present made to me the other day by an entire stranger to me? It was an almond stick cut in the woods of the Alhambra at Granada, and surmounted by a gold *castellano* of the date of Ferdinand and Isabella, set in gold on the head of the stick, which was polished into a cane. The coin bears the effigies of Ferdinand and Isabella, with the titles, &c., all somewhat rudely stamped. Is it not a pretty conceit, such a present?

My mother has been quite unwell the last two days, from a feverish attack, now subsided; but we were alarmed about her for a short time. But we shall still "keep a parent from the sky," I trust.

Pray take care of yourself, and believe me

Always faithfully yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO MR. EVERETT.

Boston, May 15, 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,

I take the liberty to enclose a note, which you will oblige me by forwarding to Mr. Napier, the editor of the "Edinburgh Review."[26] If anything additional is necessary as to the address, will you have the goodness to set it right?

Mr. Prescott's infirmity of sight.

In the last number of his journal is a paper that you may have read, on the "History of the Conquest of Mexico," in a foot-note of which the reviewer says that I have been blind some years. Now I have one eye that does *some* service to *me*, if not to the *state*, and I do not half like to be considered as stone-blind. The next thing I shall hear of a subscription for the poor blind author! So I have written to the Scotch Aristarch just to say that, though I have at times been, and was, particularly during the composition of "Ferdinand and Isabella," deprived of all use of my eyes, yet they have so far mended, at least one of them, — for the other is in Launcelot Gobbo's state, or his father's, I believe, — that I can do a fair share of work with it by daylight, though, it is true, I am obliged to use a secretary to decipher my hieroglyphics made by writing with a case used by the blind. I am entitled to some allowance on this score for clerical errors, some of which, occasionally, have been detected just in time to save me from the horrors of a comic blunder. I have no right, however, nor desire, to claim the merit of such obstacles vanquished, as are implied by *total* blindness. He will set it right, if he thinks it worth the trouble. But very

[26] To correct a mistake in the preceding number of the "Edinburgh Review," about the degree of his blindness. See *ante*, p. 267.

likely he will think John Bull would not care a fig if I had one eye or a ſcore in my cranium, and ſo let it go.

I was much pleaſed with the article in the Edinburgh. It is written with ſpirit and elegance, and in a hearty tone of commendation, which I ſhould be glad to merit, and which runs off much more freely, at any rate, than is uſual in Britiſh journals. Could you do me the favor to inform me who was the author?

Politics in the United States.

We are ſtill permitted to be repreſented by you, though, as you perceive, more from a very natural diffidence on the part of any one to ſucceed you in that perilous poſt, than from any fault of Mr. Polk. I truſt that the excitement produced by the vaunt of that eminent perſonage anent the Oregon matter has ſubſided in England. That it ſhould have exiſted at all was not eaſily comprehended here, where we perfectly underſtood that our new chief could not diſtinguiſh betwixt a ſpeech from the throne and one on the floor of Congreſs. He was only talking to Buncombe. There is a very general feeling here that you may be willing to ſubſide, after your diplomatic, into a literary career, and take the vacant poſt in the neighborhood.[27] But I ſuppoſe you have heard more than enough on that matter.

I pray you to remember me kindly to Mrs. Everett, and believe me, my dear ſir,

Yours with ſincere regard,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO MR. SUMNER.

Pepperell, Auguſt 15, 1845.

MY DEAR SUMNER,

Mr. Sumner's Oration againſt War.

Thank you for your Diſcourſe, which I have read — notes and all — with great pleaſure and great inſtruction.[28] You have amaſſed a heap of valuable and often recondite illuſtration in ſupport of a noble cauſe. And who can refuſe ſympathy with the ſpirit of philanthropy which has given riſe to ſuch a charming ideal? — but a little too unqualified.

"There can be no war that is not diſhonorable." I can't go along with this! No! by all thoſe who fell at Marathon; by thoſe who fought at Morgarten and Bannockburn; by thoſe who fought and bled at Bunker's Hill; in the war of the Low Countries againſt Philip the Second, — in all thoſe wars which have had — which are *yet* to have — freedom for their object, — I can't acquieſce in your ſweeping denunciation, my good friend.

I admire your moral courage in delivering your ſentiments ſo plainly in the face of that thick array of "well-padded and well-buttoned coats of blue,

[27] The Preſidency of Harvard College.

[28] "The True Grandeur of Nations," an Oration delivered before the city authorities of Boſton, July 4th, 1845, maintaining the extreme doctrines of the Peace Society.

CHAP. XXIV. Correspondence. 1831–1856.

besmeared with gold," which must have surrounded the rostrum of the orator on this day. I may one day see you on a crusade to persuade the great Autocrat to disband his million of fighting-men, and little Queen Vic to lay up her steamships in lavender!

You have scattered right and left the seeds of a sound and ennobling morality, which may spring up in a bountiful harvest, I trust, — in the Millennium, — but I doubt.

I shall be in town in a few days, when I shall hope to see you. Meantime remember me kindly to Hillard, and believe me, dear Sumner,

Most affectionately yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO MR. SUMNER.

Highlands, October 2, 1846.

MY DEAR SUMNER,

Mr. Sumner's oration before the Phi Beta Kappa Society.

I thank you heartily for your Phi Beta Kappa Oration, which I received a few days since. I was then up to the elbows in a bloody "battle-piece."[29] I thought it better to postpone the reading of it till I could go to it with clean hands, as befits your pure philosophy.

I have read, or rather listened to it, notes and all, with the greatest interest; and when I say that my expectations have not been disappointed after having heard it cracked up so, I think you will think it praise enough. The most happy conception has been carried out admirably, as if it were the most natural order of things, without the least constraint or violence. I don't know which of your sketches I like the best. I am inclined to think the Judge's. For there you are on your own heather, and it is the tribute of a favorite pupil to his well-beloved master, gushing warm from the heart. Yet they are all managed well, and the vivid touches of character and the richness of the illustration will repay the study, I should imagine, of any one familiar with the particular science you discuss. Then your sentiments certainly cannot be charged with inconsistency. Last year you condemned wars *in toto*, making no exception even for the wars of freedom.[30] This year you condemn the *representation* of war, whether by the pencil or pen. Marathon, Salamis, Bunker Hill, the retreat from Moscow, Waterloo, great and small, — speaking more forcibly than all the homilies of parson or philanthropist, — are *all* to be blotted from memory, equally with my

Mr. Sumner's peace doctrines.

[29] An oration entitled "The Scholar, the Jurist, the Artist, the Philanthropist," delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society in Harvard College, 1846. It is mainly devoted to a delineation of the characters of John Pickering, Esq., Judge Story, Washington Allston, the artist, and the Rev. Dr. Channing. Mr. Prescott alludes here to one phrase in it, touching the artist: "No more battle-pieces."

[30] See the last preceding letter, dated August 15, 1845.

own wild ſkirmiſhes of barbarians and banditti. Lord deliver us! Where will you bring up? If the ſtories are not to be painted or written, ſuch records of them as have been heedleſſly made ſhould by the ſame rule be deſtroyed. And I don't ſee, if you follow out your progreſs to perfection, but what you will one day turn out as ſtanch an Omar, or iconoclaſt, as any other of glorious memory.

I laugh; but I fear you will make the judicious grieve.

I puer, — *ut declamatio fias*, as ſome ſatiriſt may ſay.

But fare thee well, dear Sumner. Whether thou deporteſt thyſelf *ſanâ mente* or *mente inſanâ*, believe me

Always truly yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO MR. BANCROFT.

Boſton, March 5, 1852.

MY DEAR BANCROFT,

Mr. Bancroft's "Hiſtory of the United States."

Uncle Iſaac [31] ſent me yeſterday a copy of your new volume, and you may be ſure it occupied me cloſely during a good part of the day. Of courſe I could only glance over its contents, reading with a reliſh ſome of the moſt ſtriking pictures, — at leaſt, thoſe that would catch the eye moſt readily on a rapid ſurvey. I recognize the characteriſtic touches of your hand everywhere, bold, brilliant, and pictureſque, with a good deal of the poetic and much more of philoſophy. You have a great power of condenſing an amount of ſtudy and meditation into a compact little ſentence, quite enviable. Your introduction, — your deſcription of the working of the Reformation in its Calviniſtic aſpect eſpecially; your remarks on the political tendencies of the Old World inſtitutions and the New World; your quiet rural pictures of New England and Acadian ſcenes and ſcenery; ſtirring battle-pieces, Quebec in the foreground, and Braddock's fall, and Waſhington's riſe, — told very ſimply and effectively; — I have read theſe with care and much intereſt. Of courſe one ſhould not pronounce on a work without reading it through, and this I ſhall do more leiſurely. But I have no doubt the volume will prove a very attractive one, and to the Engliſh as well as the Yankee reader, though to the Engliſhman it opens a tale not the moſt flattering in the national annals.

Citation of authorities.

Why did you not mention your reſources, ſo ample and authentic, in your Preface? Every author has a right to do this, and every reader has a right to aſk it. Your references do not ſhow the nature of them ſufficiently, as I think. But I ſuppoſe you have your reaſons. I am glad you have another volume in preparation, and I can only ſay, God ſpeed!

With kind remembrances to your wife, believe me, my dear Bancroft,

Faithfully yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

[31] Iſaac P. Davis, Eſq., uncle to Mrs. Bancroft.

TO MR. BANCROFT.

Boſton, December 20, 1852.

Thank you, dear Bancroft, for the ſecond volume of the work immortal. It gives me a mingled ſenſation of pleaſure and pain to receive it; pleaſure to ſee what you have done, pain at the contraſt with what I have done the laſt year or two. But it will operate as a ſpur to my enterpriſe, I hope.

Mr. Bancroft's "Hiſtory of the United States."

I have only glanced over the volume, and liſtened carefully to the firſt chapters. It is a volume not to be taken at a leap, or at a ſitting, eſpecially by an American. You have given a noble platform for the Revolution by making the reader acquainted with the interior of Engliſh and Continental politics beyond any other work on the ſubject. I admire the courage as well as the ſagacity you have ſhown in your chapter on the Engliſh inſtitutions, &c. You have made John Bull of the nineteenth century ſit for his portrait of the eighteenth, and rightly enough, as the iſlander changes little but in date. I do not know how he will like the free commentaries you have made on his ſocial and political characteriſtics. But if he is tolerably candid he may be content. But honeſt Bull, as you intimate, is rather inſular in his notions, bounded by the narrow ſeas. There is more depth than breadth in his character.

Politics in the United States.

Now that your ſide has won the game, I wonder if you will be tempted away from the hiſtoric chair to make another diplomatic epiſode.[32] I ſhall be ſorry, on the whole, if you are; for life is fleeting, though art be long, and you are now warm in harneſs, running your great race of glory well. I wonder if Mrs. B. does not agree with me? Yet St. James's might offer a ſore temptation to any one that could get it.

Thackeray dines — at leaſt I have aſked him — with me on Thurſday. I wiſh you could make one of a *partie carrée* with him.

With much love to your dear lady, believe me, dear Bancroft,

Affectionately yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO MR. BANCROFT.

Boſton, January 8, 1856.

DEAR BANCROFT,

It was very kind in you to take the trouble to read my volumes through ſo carefully, and to give me the reſults of your examination.[33] I am not a little pleaſed that theſe are ſo favorable to me. It is no flattery to ſay that your opinion, with the allowance of the grain — perhaps a buſhel — of ſalt on the ſcore of friendſhip, is of more value to me than almoſt any other perſon's

[32] The ſucceſs of the Democratic party in the elections of 1852.

[33] The firſt two volumes of the "Hiſtory of Philip the Second."

in the community; you are ſo familiar with the ground of the hiſtorian, and know from experience ſo well what difficulties lie in his path. The verbal inaccuracies you have pointed out I ſhall give heed to, as well as the two blunders of date and ſpelling. With reſpect to the *French* diſcourſe at the abdication,[34] that is right. Flemiſh was the language of the people, but French was more commonly uſed by the nobility. It was the language of the court, and hiſtorians expreſſly ſtate that on this occaſion Philip excuſed himſelf from addreſſing the States on the ground of his inability to ſpeak French. Cateau-Cambreſis is alſo right, being the modern French uſage. It is ſo written by Siſmondi, by the editor of the "Granvelle Papers," and in the lateſt geographical gazetteers.

Succeſs of the "Hiſtory of Philip the Second."

The book has gone off very well ſo far. Indeed, double the quantity, I think, has been ſold of any of my preceding works in the ſame time. I have been lucky, too, in getting well on before Macaulay has come thundering along the track with his hundred horſe-power. I am glad to hear you ſay that his Catholic Majeſty is found in ſo many houſes in New York. I have had ſome friendly notices from that great Babylon. Nothing has pleaſed me more than a note which I received laſt week from Irving (to whom, by the by, I had omitted to ſend a copy), written in his genial, warm-hearted manner. My publiſhers, whoſe reader had got into rather a hot diſcuſſion with the "Tribune," I underſtand, had led me to expect a well-peppered notice from that journal. But on the contrary, an able article, from the pen, I believe, of Mr. Ripley, who conducts the literary criticiſms in its columns, dealt with me in the handſomeſt manner poſſible. Some fault was found, — not ſo much as I deſerve, — mixed up with a good deal of generous approbation; a ſort of criticiſm more to my taſte than wholeſale panegyric.

. . . . . .

Mr. Parſons on Mr. Preſcott's converſation.

I cannot conclude this collection of letters to the three eminent American ſtateſmen, with whom Mr. Preſcott moſt freely correſponded, better than with the following remarks on his converſation by his friend Mr. Parſons. "Never, perhaps," ſays Mr. Parſons, "did he ſuggeſt political, or rather party queſtions. He was himſelf no partiſan and no extremiſt on any ſubject. He had valued friends in every party, and could appreciate excellence of mind or character in thoſe who differed from him. But in this country, where all are free to be as prejudiced and violent as they chooſe, — and moſt perſons take great care that this right ſhall not be loſt for want of uſe, — it is ſeldom that political topics can be diſcuſſed with warmth,

[34] Of Charles the Fifth.

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but without paſſion, or without the perſonal acerbity, which offended not only his good taſte, but his good feelings. Perhaps he never ſought or originated political converſation; but he would not decline contributing his ſhare to it; and the contribution he made was always of good ſenſe, of moderation, and of forbearance."

CHAPTER XXV.

1852 – 1854.

Death of Mr. Preſcott's Mother. — Progreſs with "Philip the Second." — Correſpondence.

BUT while Mr. Preſcott, after his return from England, was making ſuch ſpirited advances with his work on "Philip the Second," and taking avowed ſatisfaction in it, another of the calamities of life, for which foreſight is no preparation, came upon him. On Monday, the 17th of May, 1852, in the forenoon, a gentleman whom I met in the ſtreet ſtopped to tell me that Mrs. Preſcott, the mother of my friend, was very ill. I had ſeen her only two evenings before, when ſhe was in her own chamber, ſlightly indiſpoſed, indeed, but ſtill in her accuſtomed ſpirits, and ſeeming to enjoy

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Death of Mrs. Prescott, senior.

life as much as she ever had. I was surprised, therefore, by the intelligence, and could hardly believe it. But I hastened to the house, and found it to be true. She had been ill only a few hours, and already the end was obviously near. How deeply that affliction was felt by her son I shall not forget; nor shall I forget the conversation I had with him in the afternoon, when all was over. His suffering was great. He wept bitterly. But above every other feeling rose the sense of gratitude for what he had owed to his mother's love and energy.

The impression of her loss remained long on his heart. In the subsequent July, when he went, as usual, to Nahant, he writes: —

Subsequent feeling of her loss.

July 4th, 1852. — Nahant, where we came on the first, — cold, dreary and desolate. I miss the accustomed faces. All around me how changed, yet not the scene. There all is as it always has been. The sea makes its accustomed music on the rocks below. But it sounds like a dirge to me. Yet I will not waste my time in idle lament. It will not bring back the dead, — the dead who still live, and in a happier world than this.

He did not, in fact, recover a tolerable measure of spirits until he reached Pepperell in the autumn.

"Left Nahant," he says, "September 6th, and came to the Highlands September 9th, full of good intent. Delicious solitudes; safe even from friends — for a time! Now for the Spanish battle-cry, 'St. Jago, and at them!'"

But three months later he writes: —

Resumes work.

December 4th. — St. Jago has not done much for me after all. The gods won't help those that won't help themselves. I have dawdled away my summer, and have only to show for it Chapter XII., thirty-five pages of text and four pages of notes. Fie on it! I am now well read up for Chapter XIII., and — I mean to have a conscience and reform. We left Pepperell October 26th.

In the winter of 1852–3 he made good progress again in his work; at least such progress as encouraged him, if it was not very rapid. By the 15th of May he had written the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of the Second Book, and the first chapter of Book Third, making about ninety pages in print. October 3d he had gone on a hundred and sixty pages farther;

"Philip the Second."

and, although he did not account it "railroad ſpeed," he knew that it was an improvement on what he had done ſome months before. He was, therefore, better ſatisfied with himſelf than he had been, and more confident of ſucceſs.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boſton, January 11, 1853.

Warm ſeaſon.

You have no idea of the weather you left behind you here.[1] The thermometer is at 50° at noon to-day, and the trees on the Common ſeem quite puzzled as to what to do about it. We took our cold, raw weather when you were here, at the bottom of Long Wharf, in Copp's Hill burying-ground, and the bleak Dorcheſter drive, to ſay nothing of the afternoon, when the great jet would not play for your entertainment. You have not forgotten theſe pleaſant rambles, now that you are ſo far away. Thackeray has left us. His campaign was a ſucceſsful one, and he ſaid, "It rained dollars." He dined with me thrice, and was in good flow of ſpirits till a late hour generally. He went much to the Ticknors alſo. I do not think he made much impreſſion as a critic. But the Thackeray vein is rich in what is better than cold criticiſm.

Thackeray.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boſton, March 1, 1853.

His ſtyluſes.

At length I have the pleaſure to ſend you the little nothings by Colonel Lawrence, viz. a miniature pencil-caſe, to be worn round the neck, for ornament more than uſe. *Item*, an ivory ſtylus, more for uſe than ornament, (the worſe for wear, having been pared away, as it required ſharpening an inch or more,) with which I wrote all the "Conqueſt of Mexico." I gave to dear Mrs. Milman the ſtylus that indited "Peru." Anna Ticknor has the "Ferdinand and Iſabella" one. My wife ſays ſhe will not accept the one with which I am doing the *Philippics*. As that is agate-pointed, I think it will be able to run off as long a yarn as I ſhall care to ſpin.

[1] Sir Charles and Lady Lyell had now made a ſecond viſit to the United States.

TO MRS. MILMAN.

Pepperell, September 16, 1853.

MY DEAR MRS. MILMAN,

By the ſteamer which ſailed this week I have done myſelf the pleaſure to ſend you a couple of volumes, called "Six Months in Italy." It is a book lately given to the world by a friend of mine, Mr. Hillard, an eminent lawyer in Boſton, but one who has found leiſure enough to ſtore his mind with rich and various knowledge, and whoſe naturally fine taſte fits him for a work like the preſent. The ſubject has been worn out, it is true, by book-makers; but Hillard has treated it in an original way, and as his ſtyle is full of animation and beauty, I think the volumes will be read with pleaſure by you and by my good friend your huſband.

Hillard's "Italy."

. . . . . .

The Lyells.

Since I laſt wrote to you the Lyells have made their Cryſtal Palace trip to the New World, and paſſed ſome days with me at the ſeaſide; and, as Lady Lyell has perhaps told you, I afterwards accompanied her to New York. It was a great pleaſure to ſee them again, when we thought we had bid them a long, if not a laſt adieu. But that is a word that ought not to be in our vocabulary. They are to paſs next winter, I believe, in the Canaries. They put a girdle round the earth in as little time almoſt as Puck.

My travels are from town to ſeaſide, and from ſeaſide to country. And here I am now among the old trees of Pepperell, dearer to me than any other ſpot I call my own.

Pepperell,

The Lyells have been with us here, too, and I believe Lady Lyell likes my Pepperell home the beſt. It is a plain old farm, recommended by a beautiful country, gliſtening with pretty ſtreams of water, well covered with woods, and with a line of hills in the background that aſpire to the dignity of mountains. But what endears it moſt to me is that it has been the habitation of my anceſtors, and my own ſome part of every year from childhood. It is too ſimple a place, however, not to ſay rude, to take any but an intimate friend to.

. . . . . .

Pray remember me moſt kindly to your huſband, and believe me, my dear Mrs. Milman, now and always,

Affectionately yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boſton, December 25, 1853.

A merry Chriſtmas to you, dear Lady Lyell, and to Lyell too, and good orthodox mince-pies to celebrate it with. I wonder where you are keeping it.

Not where you will find it kept in as genial a way as in Old England. How much your countrymen, by the by, are indebted to Washington Irving for showing the world what a beautiful thing Christmas is, or used to be, in your brave little island. I was reading his account of it this morning, stuffed as full of racy old English rhymes as Christmas pudding is of plums. Irving has a soul, which is more than one can say for most writers. It is odd that a book like this, so finely and delicately executed, should come from the New World, where one expects to meet with hardly anything more than the raw material. Washington Irving.

I don't know anything that has been stirring here of late that would have interest for you, or for us either, for that matter. It has been a quiet winter, quiet in every sense, for the old graybeard has not ventured to shake his hoary locks at us yet, or at least he has shed none of them on the ground, which is as bare as November. This is quite uncommon and very agreeable. But winter is not likely to rot in the sky, and we shall soon see the feathers dancing about us. Mild winter.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boston, February 26, 1854.

I dined with the Ticknors on Friday last, a snug little party, very pleasant. Anna has been in good health this winter, and in very good spirits. Good kind friends they are, and if you want to find it, be a little ill, or out of sorts yourself, and you will soon prove it.

I have been tolerably industrious for me this winter, and I hope to be in condition to make a bow to the public by the end of the year. . . . . You have heard that my publishers, the Harpers, were burnt out last December. They lost about a million; one third perhaps insured. It is said they have as much more left. I should have made by the fire, as they had about half an edition of each of my books on hand, which they had paid me for. But I could not make money out of their losses, and I told them to strike off as many more copies, without charging them. Ticknor did the same. If all their authors would do as much by them, they would be better off by at least a couple of hundred thousand dollars than their report now shows. The Harpers.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boston, May 15, 1854.

I am hard at work now on a very amiable chapter in the "History of Philip the Second," the affair of Don Carlos, for which I fortunately have a good Don Carlos.

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body of materials from different quarters, especially Spain. A romantic subject, Carlos and Isabella, is it not? Those who have read Schiller, and Alfieri, and Lord John Russell, who wrote a long tragedy on the matter, may think so. But truth is a sturdy plant, that bears too few of the beautiful flowers that belong to fiction, and the historian, who digs up the dry bones of antiquity, has a less cheering occupation than the poet, who creates and colors according to his own fancy. Some people, however, think history not much better than poetry, as far as fact is concerned. Those are most apt to think so who are let behind the scenes.

. . . . . .

TO DEAN MILMAN.

Lynn, July 24, 1854.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

"History of Latin Christianity."

I had the pleasure of receiving a few days since a copy of your "History of Latin Christianity," which you were so kind as to send me through Murray, and for which I am greatly obliged to you. As I glance over the rich bill of fare which the "Contents" hold out, I only regret that I have not the eyes to go into it at once in a more thorough manner than can be done with the ear. But a recent strain of the nerve just before I left town has so far disabled me, that for some weeks I have scarcely ventured to look at the contents of a book. I have, however, listened to some portions of it, sufficient to give me an idea of the manner in which the work has been executed. I have been particularly struck with your admirable account of Becket, and the formidable struggle which the proud priest, in the name of religion, carried on with the royalty of England. I had thought myself pretty well acquainted with the earlier portions of English history, but I have nowhere seen the motives and conduct of the parties in that remarkable struggle so clearly unveiled. As you come down to later times, the subject may have greater interest for the general reader; but yet it can hardly exceed in interest those portions of the present volumes which discuss those great events and institutions the influence of which is still felt in the present condition of society.

Thomas à Becket.

I am not sufficiently familiar with ecclesiastical history to make my opinion of any value, it is true. Yet there are some points in the execution of such a work which may be apprehended by readers not bred in any theological school; and I am sure I cannot be mistaken when I express the firm conviction that these volumes will prove every way worthy of the enviable reputation which you now enjoy, both as a scholar and a friend of humanity.

I have been bringing my long-protracted labors on the first two volumes of my "Philip the Second" to a close. I have made arrangements for their publication next spring in England and the United States, though I may be yet longer delayed by the crippled condition of my eyes.

. . . . . .

TO LADY LYELL.

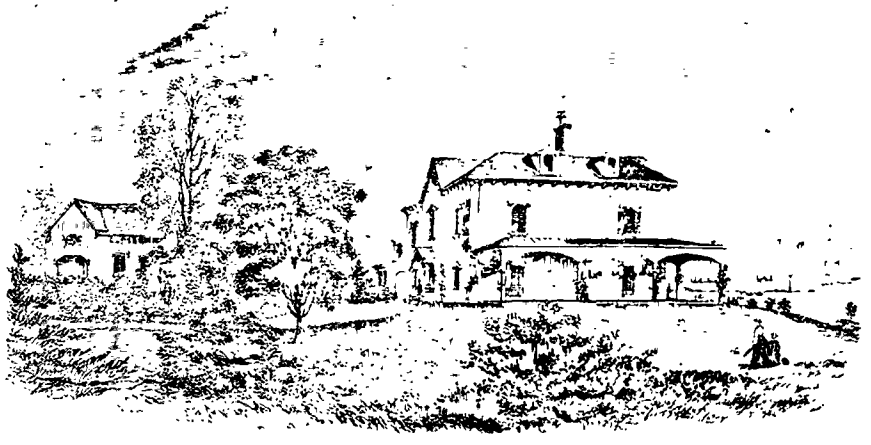
Pepperell, September 27, 1854.

DEAR LADY LYELL,

Pepperell.

Here we are in old Pepperell, after a week in which we have been in all the hubbub of the tranſition ſtate. We have come much later than uſual, for Lynn, with its green fields and dark blue waters, and the white ſails gliſtening upon them under a bright September ſun, was extremely lovely. Indeed, I think, if we were not ſo much attached to the old farm, we ſhould hardly have thought it worth while to come here for a month, as we now do, and as we always ſhall do, I ſuppoſe. In fact, the topſy-turvy life, and all the buſtle of moving from ſeaſide to town, and town to country, is ſomething like travelling on a great ſcale, and forms a very good ſubſtitute for it, juſt as that mammoth water-lily, the Victoria Regia, which you and I ſaw at Sion Houſe, and which had always depended on a running ſtream for its exiſtence, did juſt as well by Paxton's clever invention of keeping up a turmoil in a tank. The lily thought ſhe was all the while in ſome buſtling river, and expanded as glorioufly as if ſhe had been. I rather think the tank ſort of turmoil is the only one that we ſhall have; at all events, that my better half will, who I think will never ſee the viſion even of New York before ſhe dies. We have had a diſmal drought all over the country, which laſted for more than two months. Luckily, the September rains have reſtored the vegetation, and the country looks everywhere as green as in the latter days of ſpring. Then there is an inexpreſſible charm in the repoſe, a ſort of ſtillneſs which you almoſt hear, *poetice*, in the ſoft murmurs and buzzing ſounds that come up from the fields and mingle with the ſounds made by the winds playing among the trees. It makes quite an agreeable variety to the ſomewhat oppreſſive and eternal roar of the ocean. The wind as it ſweeps through the foreſt makes a muſic that one never wearies of. But I did get tired of the monotonous beat of the ocean. I longed for another tune of Nature's, and now I have got it.

Charm of the country.



CHAPTER XXVI.

Rheumatiſm at Nahant. — Boſton Homes ſucceſſively occupied by Mr. Preſcott in Tremont Street, Summer Street, Bedford Street, and Beacon Street. — Patriarchal Mode of Life at Pepperell. — Life at Nahant and at Lynn.

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Different homes.

DURING the year 1852 – 53, Mr. Preſcott was much troubled with rheumatiſm, more than he had been for a long time, and was led ſeriouſly to conſider whether his reſidence at Nahant, and his ſummer life on the edge of the ocean, muſt not be given up. He did not like the thought, but could not avoid its intruſion. Home was always a word of peculiar import to him, and any interference with his old habits and aſſociations in relation to it was unwelcome.

Moſt of theſe aſſociations had been ſettled for many years,

Different homes.

Home in Boston.

and belonged especially to Boston. From 1808, when he was only twelve years old, his proper home, as we have seen, was always there, under the same roof with his father for thirty-six years, and with his mother for forty-four.

Houses in Tremont Street and Summer Street.

The first house they occupied was on Tremont Street, at the head of Bumstead Place, and the next was in Summer Street, contiguous to Chauncy Place, both now pulled down to make room for the heavy brick and granite blocks demanded by commerce. Afterwards they lived, for a few years, at the corner of Otis Place, nearly opposite their last residence; but in 1817, Mr. Prescott the elder purchased the fine old mansion in Bedford Street, where they all lived eight and twenty years. In 1845, the year following the death of the venerable head of the household, the remainder of the family removed to No. 55 in Beacon Street, the last home of the historian and his mother's last home on this side the grave.

House in Bedford Street.

As long as his father lived, which was until Mr. Prescott himself was forty-eight years old, and until all his children had been born, there was a patriarchal simplicity in their way of life that was not to be mistaken. The very furniture of the goodly old house in Bedford Street belonged to an earlier period, or, at least, though rich and substantial, it gave token of times gone by. The hospitality, too, that was so freely exercised there, and which, to all who were privileged to enjoy it, was so attractive, had nothing of pretension about it, and very little of recent fashion. It was quiet, gentle, and warm-hearted. Sometimes, but rarely, large parties were given, and always on Thanksgiving-day, our chief domestic festival in New England, the whole of the family, in all its branches, was collected, and the evening spent, with a few very intimate friends, in merry games. Once, I remember, Sir Charles and Lady Lyell were added to the party, and shared heartily in its cordial gayety, — romping with the rest of us, as if they had been to the manner born.[1]

Hospitality.

[1] Since this was written, I have fallen on a letter of Lady Lyell to Mr. Prescott, dated January 7, 1857, in which she says: "Shall I ever forget the Thanksgiving in

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House in Beacon Street.

The eſtabliſhment in Beacon Street, where the hiſtorian ſpent the laſt thirteen winters of his life, was more modern and elegant. He had fitted it carefully to his peculiar wants and infirmities, and then added the comforts and luxuries of the time. But the hearty hoſpitality which had always been enjoyed under the old trees in Bedford Street was not wanting to his new home. He had inherited it from his grandfather and his father, and it was, beſides, a part of his own nature. There was always a welcome, and a welcome ſuited to each caſe, — to the ſtranger who called from curioſity to ſee one whoſe name was familiar in both hemiſpheres, and to the friend who entered uninvited and unannounced. No houſe among us was more ſought, none more enjoyed.

Homeſtead in Pepperell.

But Mr. Preſcott never ſpent the whole of any one year in Boſton. In childhood, he was carried every ſummer, at leaſt once, to viſit his grandmother in the family homeſtead at Pepperell. His father held ſuch viſits to be both a pleaſure and a duty. The youthful ſon enjoyed them as happy ſeaſons of holiday relaxation and freedom. Both of them naturally increaſed there a ſort of familiar affection and intimacy, which in the buſtle of the town and amidſt the engroſſing cares of the father's profeſſional life could not be ſo thoroughly rooted and cultivated.

Modes of life there in the time of his grandmother.

While the venerable grandmother lived, nothing could be more ſimple than the ways and manners in that old houſe, which was only one of the better ſort of New England farm-houſes; ſmall for our times, but not ſo accounted when it was built. Its furniture was comfortable, but already old, and dating from a period when grace and taſte in ſuch things were little conſidered. Its fare was country fare, abundant, healthful, and keenly enjoyed with appetites earned by wandering about the large, fine farm, and breathing the pure mountain air of the region. None were gathered there, however, at this period,

Bedford Street? Never, as long as I live. It is now more than fifteen years ago, but ſtill I ſee the rooms, the dinner-table, the blind-man's-buff, and the adjournment to your ſtudy to ſee Lord Kingſborough's 'Mexico.'"

except the members of the little family, which, though of three generations, numbered as yet only ſix perſons. Indeed, there was hardly room for more, and, beſides this, the aged head of the houſehold could not well enjoy any ſociety ſave that of the perſons neareſt to her, for ſhe had long been infirm, and was now nearly blind. But it was good for them all to be there. The influences of the place were ſalutary and happy. CHAP. XXVI. Different homes.

After the death of the much-loved grandmother in 1821, at the age of eighty-eight, a good deal of this was naturally changed. The eſſential characteriſtics of the quiet homeſtead were indeed preſerved, and are to this day the ſame. But the two elder children of Mr. Preſcott were already married, and room was to be found for them and for their families. A ſtudy was built for the future hiſtorian, that he might devote himſelf undiſturbed to his books, and other additions were made for hoſpitality's ſake. Everything, however, was done in the moſt unpretending way, and in keeping with the ſimplicity of the place and its aſſociations. Modes of life in the time of his father.

At this period it was that I firſt became acquainted with Pepperell, and began, with my family, ſtill young, to viſit there a few days or more every ſummer, when it was in our power to do ſo; a practice which we continued as long as the elder Mr. Preſcott lived, and afterwards until both our houſeholds had become ſo large that it was not always eaſy to accommodate them. But although, in one way or another, the old houſe at Pepperell was often full, and ſometimes crowded, yet ſo happy were the gueſts, and ſo glad were the two or three families there to receive their many friends, that no inconvenience was felt on either ſide.

Mr. Preſcott the elder was nowhere ſo completely himſelf as he was at Pepperell; I mean, that his original character came out nowhere elſe ſo naturally and fully. He was about ſixty years old when I firſt ſaw him there, after having long known him familiarly in Boſton. He was very dignified, mild, and prepoſſeſſing in his general appearance everywhere; a little Mr. Preſcott the elder at Pepperell.

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bent, indeed, as he had long been, but with no other mark of infirmity, and not many indications of approaching age. But in Pepperell, where the cares of profeſſional life were entirely thrown off, he ſeemed another man, younger and more vigorous. His ſtep on the ſoil that gave him birth was more elaſtic than it was elſewhere, and his ſmile, always kind and gentle, had there a peculiar ſweetneſs. He loved to walk about the fields his father had cultivated, and to lounge under the trees his father had planted. Moſt of his forenoons were ſpent in the open air, ſuperintending the agricultural improvements he underſtood ſo well, and watching the fine cattle with which he had ſtocked his farm, much to the benefit of the country about him.

After dinner, he preferred to ſit long at table, and few were ſo young or ſo gay that they did not enjoy the mild wiſdom of his converſation, and the ſtirring recollections and traditions with which his memory was ſtored, and which went back to the period when the ſpot where we were then ſo happy was not ſafe from the Indian's tomahawk. Later in the afternoon we generally took long drives, ſometimes long walks, and in the evening we read together ſome amuſing book, commonly a novel, and oftener than any others, one of Sir Walter Scott's or Miſs Edgeworth's. They were very happy days.

Scenery about Pepperell.

The walks and drives about Pepperell and its neighborhood are pleaſant and cheerful, but hardly more. It is a broken country, well watered and well cultivated, and the woodlands, now ſomewhat diminiſhed by the encroachments of civilization, were, at the time of which I ſpeak, abundant and rich, eſpecially on the hills. How much the hiſtorian enjoyed this free and open nature, we have already had occaſion often to notice, and ſhall find that it continued to the laſt. Everything at Pepperell was familiar and dear to him from the days of his childhood.

Walks at Pepperell.

There is a charming ſhady walk behind the houſe, looking towards the Monadnock mountain, and there many a chapter of his Hiſtories was compoſed, or conned over and fitted for the

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noctograph. On the other ſide of the road is an old grove of oaks, which he uſed to call the "Fairy Grove," becauſe under its ſpreading ſhades he had told his children ſtories about fairies, who danced there on moonlight nights and bruſhed away the gathering dews from the graſs. In the "Fairy Grove" he walked before dinner, and, as he loved companionſhip at that time of the day, I have walked many a mile with him in the path his feet had worn deep in the ſod. Farther on is a piece of his woodland, to which he had given the name of "Bloody Grove," becauſe he had aſſociated it with a wild tradition of the Indian times. There, but more rarely, we walked in the rich twilight of our ſummer evenings. It was too far off from the houſe to be much frequented.

Drives at Pepperell.

The drives were no leſs agreeable, and, like the walks, had their old aſſociations and fancy names, in which we all delighted. One was Jewett's Bridge, over the Naſhua, between Pepperell and Groton, where, when his grandfather had gone to fight the battle of Bunker Hill, and had taken all the able-bodied men with him, the women, dreſſed in their huſbands' clothes, mounted guard with muſkets and pitchforks, and abſolutely arreſted a man who was in the intereſt of the enemy, and took from his boots dangerous papers, which they ſent to the Committee of Safety.[2] Another of the favorite drives was through rich meadows and woodlands, which in the declining light of the long afternoons were full of gentle beauty, and this he called the "Valley-Forge Drive," in memory of one of the darkeſt and moſt honorable periods of Waſhington's military life, although the aſſociation was provoked only by the circumſtance that in one of the hollows which we uſed to paſs there was a large blackſmith's-forge. And yet another, the longeſt drive of all, was to a bright valley, where in a hillſide the farmer who lived hard by, miſtaking pyrites for ſilver ore, had gradually wrought a long gallery in the ſolid rock, chiefly with his own hands, ſure that he ſhould find hidden treaſure at laſt, but died without the ſight. And this little, quiet valley

[2] See Butler's "Hiſtory of Groton," (Boſton, 8vo, 1848,) p. 436.

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was always called "Glen Witherſhins," in memory of Edie Ochiltree, who was a great favorite in the old homeſtead at Pepperell.[3]

But wherever the afternoon drives or walks led us, or whatever were the whimſical aſſociations connected with them, they were always cheerful and happy hours that we thus paſſed together. The woods were often made merry with our ſhouts and laughter; for the parties after dinner were never ſmall, and no cares or anxious thoughts oppreſſed any of us. We were young, or at leaſt moſt of us were ſo, when theſe gay local aſſociations were all ſettled, and, as we grew older, we enjoyed them the more for the happy memories that reſted on them. Certainly we never wearied of them.

After the death of the elder Mr. Preſcott, his ſon preſerved, as far as was poſſible, the accuſtomed tone and modes of life in his old rural home. Three generations could ſtill be gathered there, and the houſe was enlarged and altered, but not much, to accommodate their increaſing numbers. It was the ſon's delight, as it had been his father's, not only to have his own friends, but the friends of his children, ſhare his cordial hoſpitality; and, if their number was often large enough to fill all the rooms quite as full as they ſhould be, it was never ſo large as to crowd out the trueſt enjoyment.[4]

[3] In the evenings of one of our viſits, we read aloud the whole of "The Antiquary," and I well remember, not only how it was enjoyed throughout, but how particular parts of it were eſpecially reliſhed. Edie's patriotiſm, in the laſt chapter but one, where that delightful old beggar, with not a penny in the world, enumerates the many rich bleſſings *he* would fight for, if the French ſhould invade Scotland, brought tears into the eyes of more than one of the party, including the elder Mr. Preſcott.

[4] Sometimes, indeed not unfrequently, he fancied that he ſhould like to live at Pepperell eight months in the year, or even longer. But the thought of the ſnow-drifts, and the reſtraints and ſeclufion which our rigorous winters imply under the circumſtances of ſuch a reſidence, ſoon drove theſe fancies from his mind. Their recurrence, however, ſhows how ſtrong was his attachment to Pepperell. Of this, indeed, there can be no doubt; but perhaps the moſt ſtriking illuſtration of it is to be found in the fact, that, in whatever teſtamentary arrangements he at different times made, there was always ſpecial and tender regard ſhown to this old farm, which his grandfather had reſcued from the primeval foreſt, and which he himſelf held, as his father had done, by the original Indian title. The fact to which I refer is, that in ſucceſſive wills he en-

Different homes.

But, beſides his houſes in Boſton and Pepperell, Mr. Preſcott lived for many years a few weeks of every ſummer on the ſea-coaſt. This habit was adopted originally leſs for his own ſake than for that of his father, who, on the approach of old age, found the air of the ocean important to him during the hot ſeaſon. As they had always lived together in town, ſo now they built their houſe together at Nahant, about fourteen miles from Boſton; a rocky peninſula which juts out ſo far into the ocean, that even our moſt parching ſouthweſt winds in July and Auguſt are much cooled by the waves before they reach it. The purchaſe of land was made in 1828, the year Mr. Preſcott the elder retired from the bar; and their cottage of two ſtories

Cottage at Nahant.

tailed the Pepperell eſtate in the ſtricteſt manner, although he perfectly well knew, at the time he did it, that any heir of his to whom it might deſcend could, by the very ſimple proviſions of our ſtatutes, break the entail, and convert the eſtate into an ordinary inheritance, as unfettered by conditions as if he had bought it. This, however, made no difference to Mr. Preſcott. "It was," as Mr. Gardiner, who drew the wills in queſtion, truly ſays, — "It was a matter of pure ſentiment; for the eſtate is of very moderate value as a piece of ſalable property, not at all worthy, in that view, of unuſual pains to preſerve it for the benefit of remote deſcendants. Nor had Mr. Preſcott, in truth, the ſmalleſt deſire to perpetuate wealth in connection with his name to a diſtant generation. Property in general he was content to leave, after the death of thoſe who were perſonally dear to him, and for whom he made ſpecial proviſions, to the common operation of the laws of the land, and the accidents of life. Wealth he regarded only for its uſes, and valued no more than other men. But his little Pepperell farm, ſimple and unoſtentatious as it is, he was as fond and as proud of as any baron of England is of his old feudal caſtle, and for very ſimilar reaſons. Hence he had the ſtrongeſt deſire that theſe few acres of native ſoil, which had been long in the family, — the home eſpecially of the old hero of Bunker Hill, the favorite reſort of that hero's ſon, the learned lawyer and judge, and afterwards of his grandſon, the hiſtorian, — ſhould always be held undivided by ſome one of the ſame name, blood, and lineage. He well underſtood, indeed, that he had no power in law to prevent the heir in tail from defeating this purpoſe; but he hoped and truſted that nothing but a laſt neceſſity would induce an inheritor of his blood to part with ſuch a patrimonial poſſeſſion for the little money it would produce. At any rate, he intended, ſo far as was poſſible by his own act and will, to ſecure its perpetual family tranſmiſſion; though he duly eſtimated the chances that this, in the courſe of human viciſſitudes, might not hold out for many generations beyond thoſe which he could himſelf ſee.

"He attached ſimilar feelings even to the old and valueleſs furniture of his grandſires, ſome relics of which remained in the Pepperell houſe; and, ſince he could not entail them, like the land, he takes care to bequeath all the movables of the houſe and farm to the firſt tenant in tail, who ſhould come into poſſeſſion of the eſtate, with a requeſt that he would uſe means to tranſmit them to his ſucceſſors."

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— built without the ſlighteſt architectural pretenſions, but full of reſources for comfort, and carefully fitted to its objects and poſition — was occupied by them the next ſummer. In a hot day it is the cooleſt ſpot of the whole peninſula, and therefore among the cooleſt on the whole line of our coaſt. There, with the exception of the ſummer at Pepperell, following his father's death, and that of 1850, which he paſſed in England, he ſpent eight or ten weeks of every ſeaſon for five and twenty years.

As he ſaid in one of his letters, —

> The houſe ſtands on a bold cliff overlooking the ocean, — ſo near that in a ſtorm the ſpray is thrown over the piazza, — and as it ſtands on the extreme point of the peninſula, it is many miles out at ſea. There is more than one printed account of Nahant, which is a remarkable watering-place, from the bold formation of the coaſt and its expoſure to the ocean. It is not a bad place — this ſea-girt citadel — for reverie and writing, with the muſic of the winds and waters inceſſantly beating on the rocks and broad beaches below. This place is called "Fitful Head," and Norna's was not wilder.

Doubts about Nahant.

He had, however, different minds about Nahant at different periods, and generally felt more or leſs miſgiving as to its benefits each year juſt before he was to begin his ſummer reſidence there. Sometimes he thought that the ſtrong reflection from the bright ocean, which often filled the air with a dazzling ſplendor, was hurtful to his impaired ſight. Almoſt always he perceived that the cool dampneſs, which was ſo refreſhing, increaſed his rheumatic tendencies. And ſometimes he complained bitterly that his time was frittered away by idlers and loungers, who crowded the hotels and cottages of that faſhionable watering-place, and who little thought how he ſuffered as they ſat goſſiping with him in his darkened parlor or on his ſhady piazza.[5] But wherever he might live, as he well

[5] His Memoranda contain much on this annoyance of company. In one place he ſays: "I have loſt a clear month here by company, — company which brings the worſt of all ſatieties; for the ſatiety from ſtudy brings the conſciouſneſs of improvement. But this diſſipation impairs health, ſpirits, ſcholarſhip. Yet how can I eſcape it, tied like a bear to a ſtake here? I will deviſe ſome way another year, or Nahant ſhall be 'Nae haunt of mine,' as old Stewart [the portrait-painter] uſed to ſay."

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knew, his life would be beſet with all its old infirmities, and as for viſitors, his kindly nature and ſocial propenſities would never permit him to be rigorous with his friends, and ſtill leſs with the ſtrangers who were attracted by his reputation, and whoſe calls it might ſeem churliſh to refuſe. He therefore made the beſt he could of his reſidence at Nahant, even after he had begun to entertain a ſerious doubt about its effects. This was natural. The ſharp tonic air of the ocean undoubtedly invigorated him for his work, and kept down, in part at leaſt, his troubleſome dyſpepſia,[6] while, at the ſame time, taking his principal exerciſe on horſeback in the long twilight of our ſummer evenings, he avoided, to a great degree, the injurious effects of the dazzling noonday ſplendors of the place. But his rheumatiſm at laſt prevailed. It was clearly aggravated by the damp air which penetrated everywhere at Nahant, and againſt which flannels and friction were a very imperfect defence.

Rheumatiſm at Nahant.

As, therefore, he approached the confines of old age, he found that he muſt make ſome change in his modes of life, and arrange, if poſſible, ſome new compromiſe with his conflicting infirmities. But he heſitated long. While his father lived, who found great ſolace at Nahant, he never failed to accompany him there any more than to Pepperell, and never ſeemed to ſhrink from it or to regret it, ſo important to him was the ſociety of that wiſe and gentle old man, and ſo neceſſary to his daily happineſs.

But after his father's death, and again after his mother's, the place in his eyes changed its character. It became cold, dreary, and deſolate; it wanted, as he ſaid, the accuſtomed faces. The

And in a letter to me about the ſame time, Auguſt, 1840, he ſays: "We are here in a ſort of whirligig, — company morning, noon, and night, — company to dine twice a week, — and, in ſhort, all the agreeable little interruptions incident to a watering-place or a windmill."

[6] But not always. In Auguſt, 1841, he ſays: "Nahant has not ſerved me as well as uſual this ſummer. I have been ſorely plagued with the dyſpeptic debility and pains. But I am determined not to heed them." Sometimes he ſeemed out of all patience with Nahant. Once he recorded: "An acre of graſs and old trees is worth a wilderneſs of ocean." He wrote this, however, at Pepperell, which he always loved.

CHAP. XXVI.

Different homes.

laſt ſtrong link that connected him with it was broken, and he determined to live there no more, — "his viſit oft, but never his abode."

Villa at Lynn.

Having come to this final deciſion, he purchaſed, in the ſpring of 1853, a houſe on the ſhore of Lynn Bay, looking pleaſantly over the waters to his old home at Nahant, and only half a dozen miles diſtant from it. It was a luxurious eſtabliſhment compared with the ſimple cottage for which he exchanged it, and was leſs expoſed to the annoyance of idle ſtrangers or inconſiderate friends. Its chief attractions, however, were its mild ſea-breezes, cool and refreſhing, but rarely or never ſharp and damp, like thoſe at Nahant, and its drives, which could eaſily be extended into the interior, and carried into rural lanes and woodlands. He enjoyed it very much, — not, indeed, as he did Pepperell, which was always a peculiar place to him, — but he enjoyed it more than he did any other of his reſidences in town or country, ſpending ten or twelve weeks there every ſummer during the laſt five years of his life, embelliſhing its grounds, and making its interior arrangements comfortable and agreeable to his children and grandchildren, whom he gathered around him there, as he loved to do everywhere. Still, much was added to his happineſs when, two years later, his only daughter, who had been married in 1852 to Mr. James Lawrence, was ſettled in a charming villa hardly a ſtone's throw from his door. After this he ſeemed to need nothing more, for ſhe lived ſtill nearer to him in Boſton, and viſited him at Pepperell every year with her children.

Cherry-tree at Lynn.

One thing at his Lynn home was and ſtill is (1862) very touching. There was hardly a tree on the place, except ſome young plantations, which were partly his own work, and which he did not live to ſee grow up. But ſhade was important to him there as it was everywhere; and none was to be found in his grounds except under the broad branches of an old cherry-tree, which had come down from the days of the Quaker ſhoemakers who were ſo long the monarchs of the lands there

and in all the neighborhood. Round the narrow circle of ſhade which this tree afforded him, he walked with his accuſtomed fidelity a certain length of time every day, whenever the ſun prevented him from going more freely abroad. There he ſoon wore a path in the greenſward, and ſo deep did it at laſt become, that now — four years ſince any foot has preſſed it — the marks ſtill remain, as a ſad memorial of his infirmity. I have not unfrequently watched him, as he paced his weariſome rounds there, carrying a light umbrella in his hand, which, when he reached the ſunny ſide of his circle, he raiſed for an inſtant to protect his eye, and then ſhut it again that the ſuffering organ might have the full benefit, not only of the exerciſe, but of the freſh air; ſo exact and minute was he as to whatever could in the ſlighteſt degree affect its condition.[7]

But in this reſpect all his houſes were alike. His ſight and the care needful to preſerve it were everywhere in his thoughts, and controlled more or leſs whatever he did or undertook.

7 Since writing theſe ſentences, a ſonnet has been pointed out to me in a cutting from one of the newſpapers of the time, which refers to the circle round the old cherry-tree.

"No more, alas! the ſoft returning Spring
Shall greet thee, walking near thy favorite tree,
Marking with patient ſtep the magic ring
Where pageants grand and monarchs moved with thee,
Thou new Columbus! bringing from old Spain
Her ancient wealth to this awaiting ſhore;
Returning, ſtamped with impreſs of thy brain,
Far richer treaſures than her galleons bore.
Two worlds ſhall weep for thee, the Old, the New,
Now that the marble and the canvas wait
In vain to cheer the homes and hearts ſo true
Thy immortality made deſolate,
While angels on imperiſhable ſcroll
Record the wondrous beauty of thy ſoul."

It was written, as I have learned ſince I copied it into this note, by a very cultivated lady of New York, Mrs. John Sherwood.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1853–1858.

First Summer at Lynn. — Work on "Philip the Second." — Memoranda about it. — Prints the first two Volumes. — Their Success. — Addition to Robertson's "Charles the Fifth." — Memoir of Mr. Abbott Lawrence. — Goes on with "Philip the Second." — Illness. — Dinner at Mr. Gardiner's. — Correspondence.

CH. XXVII. 1853. ÆT. 57.

MR. PRESCOTT went to Lynn on the 21st of June, 1853. He found it, as he recorded a few days afterwards, "a sober, quiet country, with the open ocean spread out before him. What," he added, "can be better for study and meditation? I hope to show the fruits of it, and yet, in this tonic air, defy the foul fiend dyspepsia. At any rate, I shall be less plagued with rheumatism."

First season at Lynn.

His first season in his new villa, however, was not very fruitful in literary results, and he was little satisfied. It was hard to get settled, and interruptions from affairs were frequent. But his life there was not without its appropriate enjoyments. He had visits from his friends Sir Charles and Lady Lyell, and from the Earl and Countess of Ellesmere, and he was with them all in a gay visit to New York, where they went for the Exhibition of that year, to which Lord Ellesmere and Sir Charles Lyell had come as Commissioners on behalf of the

"History of Philip the Second."

Britiſh government. But, though theſe were interruptions, they were much more than compenſated for by the pleaſure they gave, and, after all, he made progreſs enough to inſure to him that feeling of ſucceſs which he always found important for ſuſtaining his induſtry. In fact, by October he was ſo far advanced with the ſecond volume of "Philip the Second," that he began to make calculations as to the number of pages it might fill, as to the disposition of the remaining materials, and as to the time when the whole would be ready for the preſs. But his arrangements contemplated ſome poſtponement of the publication beyond the time he had originally propoſed for it. When noting this circumſtance, he added, with characteriſtic good-humor, "The public, I fancy, will not object to waiting."

His reſults, however, in this caſe differed more than uſual from his calculations. The ſpace filled by the troubles of Philip with the Barbary powers, by the ſiege of Malta, and by the tragedy of Don Carlos, was more than double what he had reckoned for them. The conſequence was, that the Moriſco rebellion and the battle of Lepanto, which had been deſtined for the ſecond volume, were neceſſarily poſtponed to the third. But all theſe ſubjects intereſted and excited him. From this time, therefore, he worked vigorouſly and well, and on the 22d of Auguſt, 1854, he finiſhed the laſt note to the laſt chapter of the ſecond volume.

Finiſhes the ſecond volume.

On this occaſion he made the following memoranda: —

Bad ſtate of his eyes.

By next ſpring, when I truſt theſe volumes will be publiſhed, nearly eight years will have elapſed ſince the publication of the "Conqueſt of Peru," which was alſo in two volumes, and which was publiſhed in leſs than four years after the appearance of the "Conqueſt of Mexico." The cauſe of this difference is to be charged even more on the ſtate of my eyes than on the difficulty and extent of the ſubject. For a long time after the "Peru" was publiſhed I hardly ventured to look into a book, and though I have grown bolder as I have advanced, my waning viſion has warned me to manage my eye with much greater reſerve than formerly. Indeed, for ſome time after I had finiſhed the "Peru," I heſitated whether I ſhould grapple with the whole ſubject of "Philip" *in extenſo*; and, when I made up my mind to ſerve up the whole barbecue inſtead of particular parts, I had ſo little confidence in the ſtrength of my viſion, that

Doubts about "Philip the Second."

CH. XXVII. 1854. ÆT. 58.

I thought of calling the work "Memoirs," and treating the subject in a more desultory and superficial manner than belongs to a regular history. I did not go to work in a business-like style till I broke ground on the troubles of the Netherlands. Perhaps my critics may find this out.

Time given to the first two volumes.

My first chapter was written in July, 1849, at Nahant; my last of the second volume concluded at this date at Lynn, which allows about five years for the actual composition of the work, from which six months must be deducted for a visit to England.

Size of the two volumes.

The amount of the two volumes I reckon at about eleven hundred and fifty pages, one hundred and fifty more than a wise economy would have prescribed; but I hope the reader will be the gainer by it. Nothing remains now but to correct the earlier portions of the work, especially those relating to Charles the Fifth, in which all my new things have been forestalled since I began to write by Mignet, Stirling, &c., — a warning to procrastinating historians. This tinkering, with a few biographical notices, ought not to take more than two or three months, if my eyes stand by me. But, *Quien sabe?* The two months I have been here I have hardly had two weeks' use of the eye; so much for a stupid strain of the muscles, rather than the nerve, just before I left town.

1855.

In November he began to stereotype the work, at the rate of ten pages a day. Each volume held out a little more than his estimate, but the whole was completed in May, 1855, his friend Mr. Folsom revising it all with great care as it went through the press. It was not, however, immediately published. To suit the exigencies of the time, which, from severe financial embarrassments, were unfavorable to literary enterprise, it did not appear, either in England or in the United States, until November.

Stereotyped.

Copyright.

An adverse decision of the House of Lords as to the power of a foreigner to claim copyright in England had, however, cut him off from his brilliant prospects there; and in the United States he had changed his publishers, not from any dissatisfaction with them, — for, as he said, they had dealt well with him from first to last, — but from circumstances wholly of a financial character.

Six months after the publication of the first two volumes of "Philip the Second," he made the following notice of the result: —

Success of the work.

A settlement made with my publishers here last week enables me to speak of the success of the work. In England it has been published in four separate

editions; one of them from the rival houſe of Routledge. It has been twice reprinted in Germany, and a Spaniſh tranſlation of it is now in courſe of publication at Madrid. In this country eight thouſand copies have been ſold, while the ſales of the preceding works have been ſo much improved by the impulſe received from this, that nearly thirty thouſand volumes of them have been diſpoſed of by my Boſton publiſhers, from whom I have received ſeventeen thouſand dollars for the "Philip" and the other works the laſt ſix months. So much for the lucre!

From the tone of the foreign journals and thoſe of my own country, it would ſeem that the work has found quite as much favor as any of its predeceſſors, and, as the ſales have been much greater than of any other of them in the ſame ſpace of time, I may be conſidered to have as favorable a breeze to carry me forward on my long voyage as I could deſire. This is very important to me, as I felt a little nervous in regard to the reception of the work, after ſo long an interval ſince the preceding one had appeared.

It is needleſs to add anything to a ſimple ſtatement like this. The ſucceſs of the work was complete, and has continued ſo. The reviews of it on its firſt appearance were leſs numerous than they had been in the caſe of its predeceſſors. It was a foregone concluſion that the book would be equal to its ſubject; and, beſides, the ſale both in England and in the United States was ſo large and ſo prompt, that the public deciſion was, in fact, made quite as ſoon as the critics could have been heard. There was, however, no difference of opinion anywhere on the matter; and, if there had been, the favorable judgment of M. Guizot, in the "Edinburgh Review" for January, 1857, would have outweighed many ſuch as are commonly pronounced by perſons little competent to decide queſtions they ſo gravely claim to adjudicate.[1]

"Life of Charles the Fifth."

But while the publication of the firſt two volumes of the "Hiſtory of Philip the Second" was going on, Mr. Preſcott was occupied with another work on a kindred ſubject, and one which ſeemed to grow out of the circumſtances of the caſe by a ſort of natural neceſſity. I refer to the latter part of the

[1] On the firſt of January, 1860, nearly 13,900 copies of theſe two volumes of the "Hiſtory of Philip the Second" had been ſold; but the number in England could not be given with exactneſs; although a few days later it was known that the number muſt have been greater than had been aſſumed in making up the above eſtimate.

CH. XXVII. 1856. ÆT. 60.

reign and life of Philip's illuſtrious father. It was plain that the accounts of Gachard, drawn from manuſcript ſources, which had been already ſo well uſed in Engliſh by Stirling, and in French by Mignet,[2] reſpecting the life of Charles the Fifth after his abdication, were ſo different from the accounts given by Robertſon, that his eloquent work could no longer ſerve as a ſufficient link between the times of Ferdinand and Iſabella and thoſe of their grandſon; ſtill leſs between thoſe of their grandſon and Philip the Second. It had therefore more than once been ſuggeſted to Mr. Preſcott that he ſhould himſelf fill up the interval with an entirely new work on the reign of Charles the Fifth.

Declines writing the whole life.

But this was a taſk he was unwilling to undertake. On the one hand, he had no wiſh to bring himſelf at all into competition with the Scotch hiſtorian, who had ſo honorably won his laurels; and, on the other, the reign of Philip the Second opened to him a long viſta of years all filled with labor; beſides which the times of Charles the Fifth conſtituted a wide ſubject, for which he had made no collections, and which he had examined only as a portion of Spaniſh hiſtory intimately connected with the portions immediately preceding and following it, to which he had already devoted himſelf. Still, he admitted that ſomething ought to be done in order to bring the concluding period of Robertſon's Hiſtory into harmony with facts now known and ſettled, and with the repreſentations which muſt conſtitute the opening chapters of his own account of the reign of Philip the Second.

Writes the Life of Charles the Fifth after his abdication.

In May, 1855, therefore, he began to prepare a new concluſion to Robertſon's "Charles the Fifth," and in the January following had completed it. It embraces that portion of the Emperor's life which followed his abdication, and makes about a hundred and eighty pages. It was not publiſhed until the

[2] The Cloiſter Life of the Emperor Charles V., by William Stirling (London, 1852, 8vo). Charles-Quint, ſon Abdication, ſon Séjour et ſa Mort au Monaſtère de Yuſte, par M. Mignet (Paris, 1854, 8vo). Gachard, L. P., Retraite et Mort de Charles-Quint, au Monaſtère de Yuſte (Bruxelles, 3 vol. 8vo, 1854, ſqq.)

ſucceeding December, the intervening months having been required to prepare and print the volumes of Robertſon, to which the account of the laſt year of the Emperor's life, the one at Yuſte, was to be the concluſion.

I was then in Europe, and on the 8th of December, 1856, he wrote to me: —

> My "Charles the Fifth," or rather Robertſon's, with my Continuation, made his bow to the public to-day, like a ſtrapping giant with a little urchin holding on to the tail of his coat. I can't ſay I expect much from it, as the beſt and biggeſt part is ſomewhat of the oldeſt. But people who like a complete ſeries will need it to fill up the gap betwixt "Ferdinand" and "Philip."

Its ſucceſs.

It had, however, the ſame ſort of ſucceſs with all his other works. Six thouſand nine hundred copies were publiſhed in London and Boſton before the end of eighteen hundred and fifty-nine.

Memoir of Mr. Abbott Lawrence.

As ſoon as his continuation of Robertſon was completed, he gave a few weeks to the preparation of a Memoir of his friend and kinſman, Mr. Abbott Lawrence, who had died in the preceding month of Auguſt. It is a graceful and becoming tribute to an eminent man, who deſerved well not only of Maſſachuſetts, where he was born and always lived, but of the country which he had faithfully ſerved in many high capacities at home and abroad, and which had wellnigh called him to what, in the courſe of events, became the higheſt.[3] The Memoir is ſhort, originally prepared for the National Portrait Gallery, and ſubſequently printed in a beautiful quarto form for private diſtribution.

Continues to work on his "Philip the Second."

In the beginning of March, 1856, he turned again to his "Hiſtory of Philip the Second," and went on with it, not rapidly, perhaps, but ſtill, with the exception of the time when

[3] Mr. Lawrence came very near being nominated by the Whig party's convention as their candidate for Vice-Preſident of the United States, inſtead of Mr. Fillmore, on the ſame ticket with General Taylor. In that caſe, he would, on the death of General Taylor, have become Preſident of the United States, as did Mr. Fillmore. Mr. Lawrence lacked very few votes of this high ſucceſs; and I ſhall never forget the quiet good-humor with which, a few minutes after he knew that he had failed of the nomination as Vice-Preſident, he came into my houſe, being my next-door neighbor, and told me of it.

CH. XXVII. 1856. ÆT. 60.

he was partly occupied in correcting for the press his addition to "Charles the Fifth," his progress was good. He had a pleasant summer at Lynn, during the heats of the season, and enjoyed his life so well in the autumn at Pepperell, that he again thought he might make his holidays there longer in succeeding years. But he never did.

Indian summer.

"Our autumn *villeggiatura*," he says, under date of October 30th, 1856, "has been charming, as usual, — the weather remarkably fine, — many of the days too *Indian-summerish*, however.[4] The vegetation has been remarkably fresh to a late period, from the great rains, and then fading, or rather flushing into a blaze of glorious colors, which, as they passed away, and the fallen leaves strewed the ground with their splendors, have been succeeded by wider reaches of the landscape and the dark-blue mountains in the distance. The old trees seem like friends of earlier days, still spreading out their venerable arms around me, and reminding me of him by whose hands so many of them were planted. No spot that I own is so full of tender reminiscences to me.

Industry.

The time has been propitious, as usual, to mental, and, I trust, moral progress. I have worked *con amore*, as I always do in these quiet shades, though not with the *furare* of those times when I turned off sometimes fifteen pages in a day. But my eyes — my literary legs — grow feebler and feebler, as I near my grand climacteric. I hope it will be long, however, before I shall have to say, *Solve senescentem*. I would rather die in harness. Another year, I trust, we may get some way into December before going into town. But I don't know. It takes two to make a bargain in my family.

The winter that followed, 1856–7, was an unhappy one,

[4] This peculiar New England season is well described in a note to the eighth sermon of a small collection first printed privately in 1812, and afterwards published, by the late Rev. James Freeman, one of the wise and good men of his time.

"The southwest is the pleasantest wind which blows in New England. In the month of October, in particular, after the frosts which commonly take place at the end of September, it frequently produces two or three weeks of fair weather, in which the air is perfectly transparent, and the clouds, which float in a sky of the purest azure, are adorned with brilliant colors. If at this season a man of an affectionate heart and ardent imagination should visit the tombs of his friends, the southwestern breezes, as they breathe through the glowing trees, would seem to him almost articulate. Though he might not be so rapt in enthusiasm as to fancy that the spirits of his ancestors were whispering in his ear, yet he would at least imagine that he heard the still, small voice of God. This charming season is called the Indian Summer, a name which is derived from the natives, who believe that it is caused by a wind which comes immediately from the court of their great and benevolent God, Cautantowwit, or the Southwestern God, the God who is superior to all other beings; who sends them every blessing which they enjoy, and to whom the souls of their fathers go after their decease."

and not without painful auguries. I was then in Italy. My letters informed me that my friend was ſuffering from ſevere headaches. He wrote me, in reply to inquiries on the ſubject, that it was true he had ſuffered from a new ſort of troubles; but he wrote lightly and pleaſantly, as if it were a matter of little conſequence. The greateſt ſeverity of his pain was from December to March. During that period, he was often unable to work at all, and from time to time, and generally for ſome hours every day, his ſufferings were very ſevere.

Severe headaches.

On my return home in September, 1857, I found his appearance conſiderably changed. He was much better, I was aſſured, than he had been during the winter; and the ever-watchful Mrs. Preſcott told me that he had been able for ſeveral months to purſue his literary labors nearly every day, though cautiouſly and ſometimes not without anxiety on her part. He was, I thought, not a ſound man, as he was when I had laſt ſeen him, fifteen or ſixteen months before; for, although he ſuffered leſs pain in his head than he had for ſome time, he was ſeldom free from annoyance there. He, however, regarded the affection, in its different forms, as rheumatic, and as connected with all the kindred maladies that from his youth had been lurking in his ſyſtem. I would gladly have agreed with him, but, when I occaſionally obſerved that the pain he ſuffered fluſhed his face and neck with a dark mahogany color, I could not drive away the apprehenſions that haunted me.

Changed appearance.

Still he was almoſt always able to occupy himſelf, at leaſt a part of each day, with his literary labors; and in the firſt weeks of the new year he wrote the opening chapters of the Sixth Book of his "Philip the Second," or, if the concluding paragraphs of the laſt of them were not abſolutely committed to paper at that time, they were compoſed, as was his cuſtom, in his memory, and were ready to be written down at the firſt moment of leiſure. This was the condition of things at the end of January, 1858.

Continues to work.

1858.

But, though he did not feel himſelf ſtrong and well during the latter part of 1857 and in the opening days of 1858, ſtill

he enjoyed life almoſt as he had done in its happieſt years. He not only worked, and did it well, but he took the ſame ſort of pleaſure in ſociety that he always had. Dining with friends, which had been his favorite mode of ſocial enjoyment, as it had been his father's, was continued, and eſpecially dining with a few; an indulgence which he could not permit to be interfered with. One of the laſt of theſe occaſions — I ſuppoſe the very laſt, before his illneſs in February, 1858, interrupted them for ſeveral months — is ſo happily deſcribed by his life-long friend, Mr. Gardiner, that I take much pleaſure in giving his account of it entire. He is ſpeaking of a ſort of dinners that Preſcott uſed to call *croneyings*, which he particularly enjoyed, and of which there are occaſional, though very rare and slight, notices in his *Memoranda*.

Croneying dinners.

One at Mr. Gardiner's.

"With what mingled emotions," ſays Mr. Gardiner, "I recall the *laſt* of theſe occaſions! I am enabled to fix its date very nearly. It was at my own houſe, either on the laſt day of January, or one of the earlieſt days of February, 1858. It was a party ſo ſmall that it hardly deſerves the name. Preſcott and two of his moſt intimate friends, beſides myſelf and my family, were all who filled a ſmall round table. He had ſuffered during the paſt year from frequent and ſevere headaches; a ſource of more uneaſineſs to his friends than to himſelf, for he never attributed theſe headaches to what the event proved them to be. He thought them either neuralgic, or a new phaſe of his old enemy, rheumatiſm; nothing that required extraordinary care. For a few days paſt he had been unuſually free from them, and this day he was particularly bright and clear. From the beginning he was in one of his moſt lively and amuſing moods. The ladies were induced by it to linger longer at the table than uſual. When they had left, the whole company was reduced to only a party of four, but of very old friends, each of whom was ſtored with many reminiſcences of like occaſions, running far back into younger days. Preſcott overflowed with the full tide of mirth belonging to thoſe days. It was a guſh of rare enjoyment. After nearly five years, the date at which I write, I cannot recall a thing that was ſaid. Probably nothing was ſaid in itſelf worth recalling, nothing that would bear to ſtand alone on cold paper. But all that quick-wittedneſs, lively repartee, ſparkling humor, exceeding *naïveté*, and droll manner of ſaying droll things, for which he was ſo remarkable when he let himſelf out with perfect freedom, were brought into full play. And then he laughed, as he only could laugh, at next to nothing, when he was in one of theſe moods, and made us inevitably laugh too, almoſt as the Cambridge Profeſſor did, according to his own ſtory. He ſtayed, too, conſiderably beyond his uſual time, the rareſt of all things with him. But he had come bent on having 'a good time,' — it was ſo long, he ſaid, ſince he had had one, — and laid out for it accordingly.

"On comparing notes a few days afterwards with the two friends who were preſent, we all agreed that we had not ſeen 'the great hiſtorian' for years in ſuch a ſtate of perfect youthful abandonment.

"It was a ſad note of ſolemn warning which led us to make that compariſon. But the picture of him as he was that night, in all his merriment, will never fade from the memory — till all fades."

TO LADY LYELL.

Boſton, November 4, 1854.

We paſſed a very quiet month in old Pepperell. Suſan was ſo fatigued with the rather buſtling life we led at Lynn, that I propoſed we ſhould live like anchorites, bating the bread and water, in the country. So we had only the children and little ones. One friend, the ex-Miniſter to England, ſpent indeed a couple of days with us. Groton, the next town, you know, to Pepperell, was his birth-place. His father was a lieutenant in my grandfather's regiment on the memorable day of Bunker Hill, when Britiſh tyranny was ſo well humbled, you recollect. The two brave companions in arms were great friends, and, being neighbors, often ſipped their *toddy* together in the ſame room where their deſcendants took their champagne and ſherry, the latter ſome of the *good* — I do not ſay the *beſt* — fruits of our glorious Revolution. It was rather intereſting to think of it, was it not? But poor Lawrence went from us to Groton to paſs a few days, and while there had a bad attack of — I don't know what, nor the doctors either — great pains in the cheſt, preſſure on the head, and inſenſibility. Yet they do not think it apoplectic in its character, but ariſing from a diſturbance of the liver, to which he has been ſubject. Any way it is very alarming. It is the third attack of the kind he has had in ſix weeks, and it makes all his friends "gueſs and fear" for the future. He is now on a very careful regimen, and pays little attention to buſineſs or anything that can excite him. His loſs would be a great one to this community, and it certainly would be ineſtimable to his family. There are few whom I ſhould be more ſorry to part with, for beſides good ſenſe and large practical information he has ſuch a genial nature, with ſuch frank and joyous manners as are not often found among us cold-blooded Yankees. I would not have you think from all this that he is at the point of death. On the contrary, I have juſt met him in the ſtreet, and looking very well. But his conſtitution is ſhaken.

Mr. Abbott Lawrence.

Soon after our return to town your friends, the Governor-General of all the Canadas and lady, turned up again, to my great ſatisfaction, as I wiſhed to ſee them, and have the opportunity of paying them ſome attention. I dined with them at the Ticknors day before yeſterday, and to-day they dine with us. We ſhall have a dozen more friends, the *famille* Sears, the elder and younger

Sir Edmund and Lady Head.

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branches, the Ticknors ſupported by Hillard, and our brave Ex-Conſul Aſpinwall. Do you think it will be prim and proſy? I wiſh you and your huſband were to help us out with it. I like the Heads very much, the little I have ſeen of them; well-bred, unaffected, and intellectual people, with uncommon good-nature for travellers, i. e. John Bull travellers.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boſton, December 24, 1854.

Lord Carliſle's "Travels."

Have you ſeen Lord Carliſle's volume of Travels? He ſent it to me the other day, and it ſtrikes me as a very agreeable record, and full of the noble ſentiments which belong to him.

Lockhart's death.

So poor Lockhart has paid the great debt. Was it not a touching thing that he ſhould have died on the ſpot endeared to him by ſo many tender and joyous recollections, and of the ſame diſeaſe which deſtroyed Sir Walter too! I liked Lockhart, the little I ſaw of him; and a vein of melancholy tinged with the ſarcaſtic gave an intereſting piquancy to his converſation. I don't know that it made his criticiſm more agreeable to thoſe who were the ſubjects of it.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boſton, December 31, 1854.

Thank you, dear Lady Lyell, for your kind note and the likeneſs[5] which accompanied it. It is charming; the noble, expanſive forehead, the little mouth that does — not ſpeak. Nothing can be more perfect. It will make a nice *pendant* to Ticknor's, executed in the ſame way. This cryſtallotype — if that is the name it goes by with you as it does with us — is a miraculous invention, and one by no means auſpicious to the engraver, or indeed the painter. Apollo, in old times, was the patron of the fine arts, and of painting among the reſt. But in our days he is made to become painter himſelf.

Cryſtallotypes.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boſton, March 15, 1855.

Humboldt.

I envy you your Continental tour, eſpecially your viſit to Berlin. It is a capital I ſhould like well to ſee, if it were only to meet Humboldt, one of the very few

[5] Of Sir Charles Lyell.

men in the world whom one would take the trouble to walk a mile to ſee; now that the Iron Duke is dead, I hardly know another I would go half that diſtance to have a look at. I have had ſome very kind letters from Humboldt, who has always taken a friendly intereſt in my hiſtorical career; and, as this has lain in his path, it has enabled me to appreciate the immenſe ſervices he has done to ſcience and letters by his curious reſearches and his beautiful manner of exhibiting the reſults of them to the reader.

FROM LORD CARLISLE.

Caſtle Howard, March 20, 1855.

OPTIME ET CARISSIME,

Nothing ever pleaſed me more, except perhaps your own moſt kind and indulgent verdict, than the opinion you encloſed to me from the erudite and weighty authority of Felton.[6] For, beſides all his intrinſic titles to reſpect and deference as ſcholar, author, and critic, he had himſelf drunk in the inſpiration of the ſelf-ſame ſcenes, and knows how feebly the pale coloring of words can portray all the glowing realities of thoſe claſſic ſhores. I will attend to your beheſt about the book when I get back to London. You will excuſe me for guiding myſelf by Homeric precedent, ſo I ſhall preſume to expect a Diomedean exchange of armor, and, in return for my light texture, to receive your full mail-clad "Philip the Second." Profeſſor Felton.

You will have perceived that we have been ſhifting ſcenes on our political ſtage with much rapidity and not a little complexity of plot. I appear myſelf before you in a new character.[7] Suppoſe you come and ſee how I comport myſelf in it. I had once an opportunity of ſhowing you a real ſovereign, and I can now treat you to the repreſentation of a mock one. I will not guarantee, however, that I may not have to deſcend from my throne before you can reach its auguſt preſence.

. . . . . .

I take up my abode in Ireland about Eaſter. I have a comfortable reſidence there, and a moſt agreeable view; not ſo ſparkling as that over the Ægean and Cyclades, but over bright freſh green and a good outline of hill. I am quite ſerious in urging you to come. You may ſend Sumner too.

Peace be with you and yours at leaſt, if it cannot be with the whole world.

Moſt affectionately,

CARLISLE.

[6] Profeſſor Felton, afterwards the much-loved Preſident of Harvard College, edited and illuſtrated with his pleaſant learning "The Diary in Turkiſh and Greek Waters," of Lord Carliſle (1855).

[7] As Viceroy of Ireland.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boſton, April 25, 1855.

. . . . . .

I don't think I do myſelf quite juſtice in ſaying I am a fixture, becauſe I ſtick to the eaſy-chair; for, after all, the mind is the man, and my mind has carried me over many a league ſince I ſaw you laſt, and far back, too, into other centuries. If I ſhould go to heaven when I quit this dirty ball, I ſhall find many acquaintances there, and ſome of them very reſpectable, of the olden time; many whoſe letters I have read ſince their death, never intended for vulgar eyes to feed upon. Don't you think I ſhould have a kindly greeting from good Iſabella? Even Bloody Mary, I think, will ſmile on me; for I love the old Spaniſh ſtock, the houſe of Traſtamara. But there is one that I am ſure will owe me a grudge, and that is the very man I have been making two big volumes upon. With all my good-nature I can't waſh him even into the darkeſt French gray. He is black and all black. My friend Madame Calderon will never forgive me. Is it not charitable to give Philip a place in heaven?

. . . . . .

So Lord Carliſle has got the Iriſh ſceptre. He has written kindly to aſk me to viſit him this ſummer, and ſee his vice-regal ſtate. I ſhould like nothing better; but I have my four acres of *lawn*, and ever ſo many greener acres of ſalt water to overlook, to ſay nothing of generations of deſcendants, who will be crying out for me like pelicans in the wilderneſs, ſhould I abſcond. An edition, by the by, of Carliſle's book is in the preſs here, and will come out under Felton's care. He went over the ſame ground, at about the ſame time with Lord C.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boſton, June 17, 1855.

. . . . . .

We are very buſy juſt now preparing for our ſeaſide flitting. It is a great pleaſure to us that Elizabeth is to be ſo near us.[8] Her new houſe is on a larger ſcale, and every way a more ambitious affair, than ours. I expect to revel in babies, for William and his wife and nurſery take up their quarters the firſt month with us.[9] I ſuppoſe Anna Ticknor, with whom I dined yeſterday, — no one but the family, — has told you of Mr. Lawrence's illneſs. It is the old trouble, chiefly of the liver. A fortnight ſince, as I walked with him round the

[8] Mrs. James Lawrence, his only daughter, removed this ſeaſon to a ſummer villa in his neighborhood at Lynn.

[9] His eldeſt ſon, then expected from Europe with his family.

Common, I told him he was loſing ground and ſhould go to Europe. I went in and ſaw his wife, and it was arranged before I left, that he ſhould take paſſage for England the 20th of June. That night he became very ill, and has been ever ſince in bed. He is now ſlowly mending, and, if well enough, will embark probably early in July; I ſhould not think, however, before the middle of it. He juſt ſent me from his ſick-bed a ſcrap of paper, ſimply ſtating that "eighty years ago, June 17th, his father and my grandfather fought ſide by ſide on Bunker Hill,"—a ſtirring *reminiſcence* for a ſick-bed.

FROM THE EARL OF ELLESMERE.

Oxford, September 27, 1855.

DEAR MR. PRESCOTT,

Your kind and ſad letter has remained long unacknowledged. It reached me at a moment when I was leaving London for an excurſion leſs of pleaſure than of buſineſs, a viſit to the Paris Exhibition; and from my arrival there to my return a few days ſince I have been deprived of any uſe of my right hand by my uſual enemy. If my right hand had more cunning than it pretends to, it could not convey what either Lady Elleſmere or myſelf feels on the fruſtration of the pleaſant hope we had lately entertained of meeting again with the kind and good friend, whom I yet hope to meet, though not in this weary world.[10]

It ſeems but a day, but an hour, ſince he left us,
With no ſign to prepare us, no warning to pain,
As we clung to the hand of which death has bereft us,
Little thinking we never ſhould claſp it again.

We ought to have thought ſo;—to earth, for a ſeaſon,
Worth, friendſhip, and goodneſs are lent, but not given;
And faith but confirms the conjecture of reaſon,
That the deareſt to earth are the fitteſt for heaven.

I venture to quote the above, not as good, for they are my own, but as appoſite, be they whose they may. They were written on the loſs of a very valued friend and relative, Lord William Bentinck. We need no knell over the Atlantic to tell us of the frailty of human ties. I have perſonally been ſpared as yet, and no name is coupled with the horrors of our late Crimean deſpatches which directly concerns mine or me; but ſome have been reaped in this bloody harveſt whom I knew enough to value, and many—a ſon among the number—are expoſed to the further chances of this awful and apparently interminable ſtruggle. Nothing is on record ſince the ſiege of Jeruſalem, unleſs it be ſome of the paſſages of the retreat from Moſcow, which equals the ſickening horrors

[10] Mr. Abbott Lawrence.

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of the "Times" of to-day; and we in England, though our people did what they could, and died in the Redan, have not the blaze of ſucceſs to conſole us, which makes France forget its loſſes. I believe our cauſe is good. I cannot truly ſay that in other reſpects, as a nation, we have deſerved other than ſevere trial, for we entered on this war, in my opinion, with much levity, ignorance, and preſumption. I think we were right in going to war, and that we could not long have avoided it; but it is one thing to face a great calamity calmly and ſternly, from a ſenſe of right and duty, and another to court the encounter with cheers and jeers and vaunting. I writhe under the government of Journaliſm. We are governed at home, and repreſented abroad, by a preſs which makes us odious to the world.

I am here at Oxford doing rather hard and unpaid ſervice on a commiſſion for ſhaping out and regulating the introduction of the changes directed by Parliament in the Univerſity;—a good deal of dry and heavy detail, but not without intereſt and ſome proſpect of ultimate advantage. I lie on my back, and dignities drop into my mouth. I am appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Lancaſhire, for the excellent reaſon that there happens to be nobody elſe who comes within the uſual category of qualifications of rank, reſidence, and political tendencies. It makes me a General of ſeven regiments of militia, an *Admiral*, and Cuſtos Rotulorum, and covers me with ſilver-lace and epaulets! It does not, thank Heaven, in Lancaſhire convey, as in other counties, the power of recommending perſons to the magiſtracy. The fact is, there is uſually nothing to do in the office, but at preſent the militia does involve ſome buſineſs. . . . . .

E. ELLESMERE.

FROM MR. HALLAM.

Pickhurſt Broomley, Kent, December 5, 1855.

MY DEAR MR. PRESCOTT,

I muſt return you my beſt thanks for your very kind preſent of your "Hiſtory of Philip the Second," which I received in town from Bentley laſt week. I only repeat the univerſal opinion in praiſing the philoſophical depth of reflection, the juſtneſs of the ſentiments, and the admirable grace of the ſtyle. I have not been lately in the way of ſeeing many people, but I am convinced that there will hardly be a difference of opinion upon the ſubject. If I regret anything, it is that you have ſo large a portion of your labor left behind.

You are quite right in ſuppoſing that the local intereſt about public events is unfavorable to literature. Macaulay's volumes will probably appear within a fortnight. He prints, I believe, twenty-five thouſand copies, and they are all beſpoken.

. . . . .

With my beſt wiſhes, believe me, my dear Mr. Preſcott,

Very truly yours,

HENRY HALLAM.

TO MRS. MILMAN.

Boſton, December 24, 1855.

. . . . . .

I had a note from Macaulay the other day, in which he ſpoke of having juſt finiſhed his book. I ſuppoſe ere now it is launched upon the great deep. I am glad that he has given me time to get out of the way with my little argoſy, before taking the wind out of my ſails. His readers on this ſide of the water count by thouſands and tens of thouſands. There is no man who ſpeaks to ſuch an audience as Macaulay. It is certainly a great reſponſibility. I was ſorry to learn from him that he was confined to his houſe. When I was in England, he ſeemed to have too robuſt a conſtitution to be eaſily ſhaken by diſeaſe.

I gather my little circle of children and grandchildren about me to-morrow, to keep our merry Chriſtmas. There will be a touch of ſadneſs in it, however; for more than one ſeat will be made vacant by the death of poor Mr. Lawrence. His death has made a ſad gap in our family gatherings. He will long live in the hearts of all who knew him.

Pray remember me, my dear Mrs. Milman, in the kindeſt manner, to my good friend your huſband, and to your family, and believe me

Very truly and affectionately yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO COUNT ADOLPHE DE CIRCOURT.

Boſton, April 7, 1856.

MY DEAR COUNT CIRCOURT,

I have read with the greateſt pleaſure your letter containing your remarks upon "Philip the Second." The ſubject is a difficult one to treat, and I have naturally felt a good deal of ſolicitude in regard to the judgment of competent critics upon it. The opinions, as far as I have gathered them from the criticiſms that have appeared in England and in this country, have certainly been very friendly to me; but I cannot but feel that very few of thoſe that criticize the work are particularly qualified to judge of it, for the ſimple reaſon, that they are not acquainted with the ſubject, or with the hiſtoric ſources from which the narrative is derived. I was particularly gratified, therefore, to get an opinion from you ſo favorable on the whole to the execution of the taſk. And yet I am aware that, from a friend ſuch as you are, not merely the *granum ſalis*, but a whole buſhel of ſalt, to take our Engliſh meaſure, muſt be allowed. I have alſo had the pleaſure of receiving this week a letter from Gachard, and no critic can be more qualified certainly in what relates to the Netherlands, and I hope you will not think it vanity in me when I ſay to you that his approval of my labors was conveyed in a tone of apparent candor and good faith which gave me ſincere pleaſure.

What gave me no leſs pleaſure than your general commendation was the liſt of errata which accompanied it; not that I was happy to find I had made ſo many blunders, but that I poſſeſſed a friend who had the candor and ſagacity to point them out. I am filled with aſtoniſhment when I reflect on the variety, the minuteneſs, and the accuracy of your knowledge. With this ſubject, thrown up by chance before you, you ſeem to be as familiar as if it had been your *ſpécialité*. I ſhall not fail to profit by your intelligent criticiſm, as my future editions in England and my own country will teſtify. Allow me to ſay, however, that your cloſing critique on a reading of Balbi, which I give in the notes, is not, I think, conformable to the author's meaning. This I gather from the context as well as from a more explicit ſtatement on the ſubject by Calderon, another authority quoted by me, from whom the reaſons given by me in the text are more eſpecially derived. When the notice which you have been ſo kind as to write of the work appears, you will have the kindneſs to ſend it to me; and this reminds me that I have not been ſo fortunate as to receive an article which you promiſed ſome time ſince to ſend me on the career of Charles le Téméraire, a ſubject which has much intereſt for me, and which I truſt you will not forget.

Do you know that our friends the Ticknors propoſe to viſit Europe in the ſpring, and to paſs a year or more on the Continent. I know you will like to take by the hand again this dear old friend, who has a mind as bright, and a heart as warm, as in earlier days. I know no one whoſe ſociety I can ſo ill ſpare. I met your friend Mrs. —— laſt evening, and ſhe ſpoke to me about you and Madame de Circourt, whom ſhe ſpoke of as being in a very poor ſtate of health. I was aware that ſhe had ſuffered much from the deplorable accident which lately befell her; but I truſt, for your ſake and for that of the ſociety of which ſhe is ſo diſtinguiſhed an ornament, that her apprehenſions have exaggerated the amount of her illneſs.

I congratulate you on the termination of this unhappy war, which ſeemed likely to bring nothing but miſery to all the parties engaged in it, though Napoleon may have found his account in the luſtre which it has thrown upon the French arms; a poor compenſation, after all, to a reflecting mind, for the inevitable evils of war. In the mean time you are bleſſed with an imperial baby, which, I ſuppoſe, is equivalent to half a dozen victories, and which will be worth more to Napoleon, if it can ſerve to perpetuate his dynaſty. But whoever has read the paſt of France for the laſt thirty years will feel no great confidence in omens for the future.

We have ſome petty ſubjects for quarrelling with John Bull on hand juſt now, which may eaſily be diſpoſed of, if the governments of the two countries are in a tolerably amiable mood. If they are not, I truſt there is good ſenſe and good feeling enough in the two nations to prevent their coming to blows about trifles which are not of the ſlighteſt real importance to either party. Unhappily, it does ſometimes happen that diſputes, which are founded on feeling rather than reaſon, are the moſt difficult for reaſonable men to ſettle.

With conſtant regard, believe me, my dear Count Circourt,

Very truly your friend,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO SIR CHARLES LYELL.

Boſton, November 11, 1856.

I wrote to her [Lady Lyell] in my laſt letter, I think, that I was about to ſend ſomething again in the hiſtorical way into the world. The greater part, however, is not my work, but that of a much bigger man. Robertſon, you know, cloſes his "Hiſtory of Charles the Fifth" with his reign, beſtowing only two or three pages, and thoſe not the moſt accurate, on his life after his abdication. As his reign comes between that of Ferdinand and Iſabella and the reign of that virtuous monarch Philip the Second, (who may be conſidered as to other Catholics what a Puſeyite is to other Proteſtants,) my publiſhers thought it would be a proper thing — that is a *good* thing — if I were to furniſh a continuation of Robertſon, for which I have the materials, ſo as to bring him within the regular ſeries of my hiſtorical works. This I have accordingly done to the tune of ſome hundred and fifty pages, with comparatively little trouble to myſelf, having already touched on this theme in "Philip the Second." It was intended for the Yankee public in particular; but Routledge brings it out in London in four editions at once; and a copy of the largeſt octavo I have ordered him to ſend to you. Do not trouble yourſelf to read it, or thank me for it, but put it on your ſhelves, as a memento of friendſhip, very ſincere, for you.

FROM DEAN MILMAN.

Deanery St. Paul's, December 1, 1856.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The date of your laſt letter looks reproachfully at me, but I am ſure that you will aſcribe my long ſilence to anything rather than want of the moſt ſincere and cordial friendſhip. I received it during our ſummer wanderings in Germany, where we paſſed many weeks, — holiday-weeks, — in great enjoyment, and, I rejoice and am thankful to be able to ſay, in uninterrupted, perhaps improved, health. We paid a viſit to our friend Bunſen at Heidelberg, whom we found (I know not whether you made his acquaintance in England) in the dignity and happineſs of literary quiet and labor, after having ſo honorably loſt his high diplomatic poſition. He has a beautifully ſituated houſe, looking over the bright Neckar, and up to the noble ruins of the Caſtle. From thence we took the courſe of the fine Bavarian cities, Aſchaffenburg, Wurtzburg, Bamberg, Nüremberg. At Donauwik we launched on the rapid Danube, and followed its ſtream to Vienna and to Peſth. To us the Danube is a noble ſtream, eſpecially after its junction with the Inn, amid the magnificent ſcenery about Paſſau; though I know that you Americans give yourſelves great airs, and would think but lightly of the power

and volume of ſuch a river. From Vienna to Prague and Dreſden. At Dreſden we had the great pleaſure of falling in with the Ticknors, whom I had frequently ſeen during their ſhort ſtay in London ; and alſo with their moſt charming relative, our friend Mrs. Twiſleton, and her lord. Then to Berlin, and after a peep into Holland we found our way home. We, indeed, have been hardly ſettled at home (having paid ſome viſits in the autumn) till within two or three weeks.

Among the parcels which awaited me on my arrival was your graceful and juſt tribute to the memory of our excellent friend, poor Mr. Lawrence. I ſhould have read it with great intereſt for his ſake if from another hand, — with how much more, when it came from you, executed with your accuſtomed ſkill and your pleaſant ſtyle, heightened by your regret and affection.

I have not yet ſeen your concluding chapters (announced in this week's Athenæum) to the new edition of Robertſon's "Charles the Fifth." I doubt not that you have found much to ſay, and much that we ſhall be glad to read, after Stirling's agreeable book. . . . . (By the way, at the Goldene Kreuz Hotel at Regenſburg [Ratiſbon], which was once a fine palace, they ſhow the room in which John of Auſtria was born.) But his life is comparatively of trivial moment in the darkening tragedy (for you muſt allow it to gather all its darkneſs) of Philip the Second's later years. Though I would on no account urge you to haſte incompatible with the full inveſtigation of all the accumulating materials of thoſe fearful times, yet you muſt not allow any one elſe to ſtep in before you, and uſurp the property which you have ſo good a right to claim in that awful imperſonation of all that is anti-Chriſtian in him who went to his grave with the conviction, that he, above all other men, had diſcharged the duties of a Chriſtian monarch.

I am now, as you may ſuppoſe, enjoying my repoſe with all my full and unexhauſted intereſt in literary ſubjects, in hiſtory eſpecially, and poetry, (I truſt that it will laſt as long as my life,) but without engaging in any ſevere or continuous labor. *Solve ſeneſcentem*, is one of the wiſeſt adages of wiſe antiquity, though the aged horſe, if he finds a pleaſant meadow, may allow himſelf a light and eaſy canter. I am taking moſt kindly to my early friends, the claſſic writers; having read, in the courſe of my later life, ſo much bad Greek and Latin, I have a right to refreſh myſelf, and very refreſhing it is, with the fine clear writings of Greece and Rome. . . . . .

So far had I written when, behold! your ſecond letter made its appearance, announcing your promiſed preſent of "Charles the Fifth." I at firſt thought of throwing what I had written behind the fire, but ſoon determined rather to inflict upon you another ſheet, with my beſt thanks, and aſſurances that I ſhall not leave my neighbor Mr. Routledge long at peace. . . . . .

And now to cloſe, my dear friend, I muſt add Mrs. Milman's kind love. She begs me to ſay that you have read her a leſſon of charity towards Philip the Second, which ſhe almoſt doubts whether your eloquence can fully enforce upon her. . . . . .

H. H. MILMAN.

Do come and ſee us again, or make me twenty years younger, that I may croſs to you.

TO LADY MARY LABOUCHERE.

Boſton, February 7, 1857.

MY DEAR LADY MARY,

It was with very great pleaſure that I received the kind note in your handwriting, which looked like a friend that I had not looked upon for a long time. And this was followed ſoon after by the portrait of your dear mother, forwarded to me by Colnaghi from London. It is an excellent likeneſs, and recalls the ſame ſweet and benevolent expreſſion which has lingered in my memory ever ſince I parted from her at Caſtle Howard. I have wiſhed that I could think that I ſhould ever ſee her again in her princely reſidence. But there is little chance, I fear, of my meeting her again in this world. Pray, when you next ſee her, give my moſt reſpectful and affectionate remembrances to her. You have been fortunate in keeping one parent from the ſkies ſo long. My own mother ſurvived till ſome few years ſince, and we were never parted till death came between us. This is a bleſſing not to be eſtimated. And ſhe was ſo good that her removal, at the age of eighty-four, was an event leſs to be mourned on her account than on ours who ſurvived her.

Dowager Lady Carliſle.

I was extremely ſorry to hear of Lord Elleſmere's ſevere illneſs. Sir Henry Holland gave me ſome account of it in a letter ſome time ſince. From what you write and what I have heard elſewhere, I fear that his reſtoration to health is ſtill far from being complete.

I wiſh there were any news here that would intereſt you. But I lead a very quiet, domeſtic ſort of life, which, as far as I am concerned, affords little that is new. I am at preſent robbed of both my ſons, who are paſſing this winter in Paris, and probably will paſs the next in Italy. The eldeſt has his wife and children with him, and I carry on a ſort of nurſery correſpondence with my little granddaughter, who has almoſt reached the reſpectable age of five. My own daughter, Mrs. Lawrence, and her two children, live within a ſtone's-throw of me, both in Boſton and in the country, where we paſs our ſummers. And this doubles the happineſs of life.

It is a pleaſant thing for us that our two nations ſhould have ſuch kindly feelings as they now ſeem to have for one another. The little affair of the "Reſolute" ſeems to have called them all out. We are brethren who have too large an inheritance in common of the paſt to forget it all for ſome petty quarrel about a thing which can be of no real importance to either.

I am glad to learn that the members of your own family are in ſuch good health. I ſuppoſe you ſee little of Morpeth, to whom I write occaſionally, and think myſelf lucky when I get an anſwer, eſpecially when it comes through ſo kind a ſecretary as you. I am not likely to forget your features, for the charming portrait which you laſt ſent me ſtands in a frame on a ledge of my bookcaſe in the library, which is our ſitting-room.

CH. XXVII. 1857. ÆT. 60.

Pray remember me moſt kindly to your ſiſters and your brother Charles, and believe me, dear Lady Mary, with ſincere regards to Mr. Labouchere,

Moſt truly and affectionately yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boſton, April 4, 1857.

. . . . . .

I believe I told you of my headaches, which Jackſon conſiders as belonging to my rheumatic habits, and bred in the bone. Very bad habits they are. I am happy to ſay the aches have nearly ſubſided, though I have loſt two good months by them. Agaſſiz, who dined with me on Wedneſday, filled me with envy by ſaying he had worked fifteen hours the day before. What is the man made of? The great book on Turtles has been delayed, from his deſire to make it more complete. He has brought into it diſcuſſions on a great variety of themes terreſtrial and celeſtial. It reminded me, I told him, of the old coſmographical myth of the Indians, where the world was ſaid to reſt on an elephant and the elephant on the back of a tortoiſe. For myſelf, I think it would be a great improvement if he would furniſh a chapter on turtle-doves, with their tender aſſociations, inſtead of the real turtle, whoſe beſt aſſociations, as far as I know, are thoſe connected with an alderman or a lord-mayor's feaſt. But Agaſſiz thinks he has not half exhauſted the ſubject. . . . . .

Agaſſiz.

FROM MR. IRVING.

Sunnyſide, Auguſt 25, 1857.

MY DEAR MR. PRESCOTT,

You ſay "you don't know whether I care about remarks on my books from friends, though they be brothers of the craft." I cannot pretend to be above the ordinary ſenſitiveneſs of authorſhip, and am eſpecially alive to the remarks of a maſter-workman like yourſelf. I have never been leſs confident of myſelf and more conſcious of my ſhort-comings, than on this my laſt undertaking, and have inceſſantly feared that the intereſt might flag beneath my pen. You may judge, therefore, how much I have been gratified by your aſſurance that the intereſt felt by yourſelf and Mrs. Preſcott on reading the work "went on *creſcendo* from the beginning, and did not reach its climax till the laſt pages."

Life of Waſhington.

I thank you, therefore, moſt heartily, for your kind and acceptable letter, which enables me to cheer myſelf with the perſuaſion that I have not ventured into the field once too often; and that my laſt production has eſcaped the fate of the Archbiſhop of Granada's.

You hint a wiſh that I would viſit your Northern latitudes, and partake of the good-fellowſhip that exiſts there; and, indeed, it would give me the greateſt

pleaſure to enjoy communionſhip with a few choice ſpirits like yourſelf, but I have a growing dread of the vortex of gay ſociety into which I am apt to be drawn if I ſtir from home. In fact, the habits of literary occupation, which of late years I have indulged to exceſs, have almoſt unfitted me for idle, gentlemanly life. Relaxation and repoſe begin to be inſupportable to me, and I feel an unhealthy hankering after my ſtudy, and a diſpoſition to relapſe into hard writing.

Love of labor.

Take warning by my caſe, and beware of literary intemperance.

Ever, my dear Preſcott,

Yours very truly,

WASHINGTON IRVING.

TO LADY LYELL.

November 30, 1857.

When the times are bad, I fortunately have a ſnug retreat on my little farm of the ſixteenth century, and an hour or two's converſation with my good friend Philip generally puts me at peace with the world. I ſuppoſe you eſchew all books while you are on the wing. If you ever meet with an Engliſh one, and can get hold of Thackeray's laſt, "The Virginians," publiſhing in numbers, I believe, in England as well as here, I wiſh you would look at it, if only to read the firſt paragraph, in which he pays a very nice tribute to my old ſwords of Bunker Hill renown, and to their unworthy proprietor. It was very prettily done of him. I am well booked up now in regard to my Engliſh friends, firſt from the Ticknors, whom I have examined and croſſ-examined until I am well enough acquainted with their experiences, and now Sumner has arrived and given me four or five hours' worth of his in an uninterrupted ſtream, and a very pleaſant *raconteur* he is, eſpecially when he talks of the friends of whom I have ſuch a loving remembrance on your ſide of the water. He ſeems to have had quite a triumphant reception. When a Yankee makes his appearance in London circles, the firſt queſtion aſked, I fancy, if they think him worth aſking any about, is whether he is a pro-ſlavery man, or an anti-ſlavery, and deal with him accordingly. It would ſeem droll if, when an Engliſhman lights on our ſoil, the firſt queſtion we ſhould aſk ſhould be whether he was in favor of making the Chineſe ſwallow opium, or whether he was oppoſed to it; as if that were not only the moral, but the ſocial, ſtandard by which everything was to be teſted, and we were to cut him or careſs him accordingly. But Sumner was hailed as a martyr, and enjoys — quite contrary to uſage — the crown of martyrdom during his own lifetime. His ovation has agreed with him, and he goes to Waſhington this week. . . . . .

Thackeray's "Virginians."

Engliſh intolerance.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1858–1859.

First Attack of Apoplexy. — Yields readily. — Clearneſs of Mind. — Compoſure. — Infirmities. — Gradual Improvement. — Occupations. — Prints the third Volume of "Philip the Second." — Summer at Lynn and Pepperell. — Notes to the "Conqueſt of Mexico." — Return to Boſton. — Deſire for active Literary Labor. — Ague. — Correſpondence.

CH. XXVIII. 1858. ÆT. 61.

ON the 4th of February, 1858, in the afternoon, I happened to call on my friend for a little viſit or a walk, that being the portion of the day in which, from our reſpective occupations, we ofteneſt ſaw each other. As I entered, the air of the ſervant who opened the door ſurpriſed me, and I hardly underſtood the words he uttered with great emotion, to tell me that Mr. Preſcott was ſuddenly and ſeriouſly ill. He had, in fact, been ſeized in the ſtreet a couple

of hours before, and the affection was evidently of the brain, and apoplectic.

Attack of apoplexy.

The attack occurred just on his return from his accustomed walk in the early afternoon. Indeed, he reached home with some difficulty, and went, not without much effort, at once, and as it were *instinctively* and almost unconsciously, to his working study. His mind wandered for a few moments, and his powers of speech and motion were partly suspended. The earliest articulate words he uttered were to his wife, as she was tenderly leaning over him: "My poor wife! I am so sorry for you, that this has come upon you so soon!"

The symptoms were not formidable, and those that seemed most threatening yielded to remedies in the course of the afternoon. His venerable physician, Dr. Jackson, expressed himself to me at nine o'clock in the evening with much hopefulness, and the next day nearly all anxiety concerning an immediate recurrence of the disease was gone. But a mark had been made on his physical constitution which was never to be obliterated.

For the first two days he was kept almost entirely in bed, and in a state of absolute rest and quietness, with his room somewhat darkened. On the third day I saw him. He talked with me as clearly as he ever had when in full health, and with intellectual faculties as unclouded. But his utterance was slightly affected. His movements were no longer assured. A few words and many proper names did not come promptly at his summons. He occasionally seemed to see figures — especially the figure of a gentleman in black — moving about the room, though he was quite aware that the whole was an optical delusion. If he looked into a book, one line was strangely mingled with another, and the whole became confused and illegible. All this he explained to me in the simplest and clearest manner, as if he were speaking not of his own case, but of that of another person. He was, in fact, not under the smallest misapprehension as to the nature of his attack, nor as to what might be its consequences at a moment's notice. Nei-

Partial recovery.

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ther did he at all exaggerate his danger, or ſeem alarmed or anxious at the proſpect before him. He ſaw his condition as his phyſicians and his family ſaw it, and as the reſult proved that it muſt have been from the firſt.

In five or ſix days he walked out with aſſiſtance; but he was put upon a rigorous, vegetable diet, and his ſtrength returned ſlowly and imperfectly. After a few weeks the irregularity in his viſion was corrected; his tread became ſo much more firm that he ventured into the ſtreets alone; and his enunciation, except to the quick ear of affection, was again diſtinct and natural. But his utterance never ceaſed to be marked with a ſlight effort; proper names were never again ſo eaſily recalled as they had been; and, although his appropriate gait was recovered, it was at beſt a little ſlower than it had been, and, in the laſt weeks of his life, when I walked with him a good deal, he ſometimes moved very heavily, and more than once called my attention to this circumſtance as to a conſiderable change in his condition. In his general appearance, however, at leaſt to a caſual obſerver, in the expreſſion of his fine manly countenance, and in his whole outward bearing, he ſeemed ſuch as he had always been. Thoſe, therefore, who ſaw him only as he was met in his accuſtomed walks, thought him quite recovered. But his family and his more intimate friends were too vigilant to be thus deluded. They knew, from the firſt, that he was no longer the ſame.

Farther improvement.

Reading was the earlieſt pleaſure he enjoyed, except that of the ſociety of his houſehold and of a choſen few out of it. But it was only the lighteſt books to which he could liſten ſafely, — novels and tales, — and it was only thoſe he liked beſt, ſuch as Miſs Edgeworth's Helen and Scott's Guy Mannering, that could ſatisfy him enough to enable him to keep his attention faſtened on them. Even of ſuch he ſoon wearied, and turned with more intereſt, though not with conviction, to parts of Buckle's firſt volume on the "Hiſtory of Civilization," then recently publiſhed.[1]

Enjoyment of reading.

[1] When Profeſſor Playfair was ſuffering from his laſt painful diſeaſe, his affectionate

A very different and a ſtronger intereſt, however, he felt in liſtening, as he did a little later, to the accounts of caſes of eminent men of letters reſembling his own; to Adam Ferguſon's, in the Memoirs of Lord Cockburn, which was full of encouragement, and to Scott's, in Lockhart's "Life," which, on the other hand, could not fail to ſadden him, and yet which he inſiſted on following, through all its painful details, to its diſheartening, tragical cataſtrophe.

This phaſis of his diſeaſe, however, paſſed gradually away, and then he began to crave afreſh the occupations and modes of life to which he had always been accuſtomed;—simple, both, as they could be, and laborious, but which had become seriously important to him from long habit. His phyſician adviſed a very moderate and cautious uſe of wine; a glaſs a day at firſt, and afterwards a little more, ſo as to increaſe his ſtrength, and enable him to return, in ſome degree at leaſt, to the ſtudies that were ſo neceſſary to his daily happineſs; ſtill reſtricting him, however, to a merely vegetable diet. The preſcriptions were rigorouſly obeyed; and he was able ſoon to take exerciſe in walking equal to four miles a day, which, if it was materially leſs than he had found uſeful and eaſy when he was in full health, was yet much more than he had of late been able to ſuſtain. It was, therefore, a great point gained, and he thankfully acknowledged it to be ſuch. But ſtill he marked the difference in his general ſtrength, and knew its meaning.

Encouraged, however, by his improvement, ſuch as it was, and permitted at leaſt, if not counſelled to it, by his medical adviſer, he now adventured once more within the domain of his old and favorite ſtudies. He did not, indeed, undertake to prepare anything for the fourth volume of "Philip the Second"; nor did he even go on to fill out the third to the full proportions into which he had originally determined to caſt it.

attendants tried to amuſe him with the early novels of Scott, then juſt in the courſe of publication, and other books of the ſame ſort, which, when well, he much enjoyed. But now they ſoon became weariſome to him. "Try a little of Newton's 'Principia,'" ſaid the dying philoſopher; and, for a time, his attention was commanded.

CH. XXVIII. 1858. ÆT. 62.

But the concluſion of the laſt chapter that he ever finiſhed, a few paragraphs only — which, as was his wont, he had, I believe, compoſed before his attack and had preſerved to a good degree in his memory — was now reduced to writing, and the manuſcript completed ſo far as it was deſtined ever to be.

In April, 1858, he went to preſs with it, and in the courſe of the ſummer the ſtereotyping was finiſhed; the whole having undergone, as it advanced, a careful reviſion from his ever-faithful friend, Mr. Folſom. In this part of the work of publiſhing, he took much pleaſure; more, I believe, than he had before in any ſimilar caſe. The reaſon is ſimple. He did not like to think that he was, in conſequence of his diminiſhed ſtrength, obliged to reduce the amount of his intellectual exertions; and, while his preſent occupation was light and eaſy, he could feel that it was indiſpenſable, and that it came now in regular courſe, inſtead of being taken up becauſe he was unequal to work that was heavier. He expreſſed this to me with much ſatisfaction at Lynn one day after dinner, when he was near the end of his taſk; for, although he felt the fearful uncertainty of his condition, he did not like to think that he was in any degree yielding to it. His courage, in this reſpect, was abſolute. It never faltered.

At Pepperell, where he went on the 25th of September, he ventured a little further. In 1844 two tranſlations of his "Conqueſt of Mexico" had appeared in Mexico itſelf, one of which was rendered more than commonly important by the comments of Don Joſé F. Ramirez at the end of the ſecond volume, and the other by the notes of Don Lucas Alaman, a ſtateſman and man of letters of no mean rank, who had long occupied himſelf with the hiſtory of his country. Mr. Preſcott now buſied himſelf with theſe materials, as, I think, he had done before, and prepared a conſiderable number of additions and emendations for a future edition of the original work.

"I am now amuſing myſelf," he ſays, under the date of Sep-

tember 30th, "with making ſome emendations and additional notes for a new edition, ſome day or other, of the 'Conqueſt of Mexico.' Two Mexican tranſlations of the work, enriched with annotations, furniſh a pretty good ſtock of new materials for the purpoſe." The amount that he accompliſhed is conſiderable, and *it will*, I hope, be uſed hereafter, as its author intended *it ſhould* be.

But though ſuch labor was light compared with that needful in the proſecution of his ſtudies for the "Hiſtory of Philip the Second," if he had ventured to take them up in earneſt, ſtill little that he did during that ſummer and autumn was wholly free from painful effort. I witneſſed it more than once while he was at Lynn, where headaches, though treated as of little account, yet gave occaſion for grave apprehenſions, — not the leſs grave, becauſe their expreſſion, which could have done only harm, was carefully forborne by thoſe about him.

His occupations at Pepperell, however, can hardly have injured him. At any rate, he felt that what he had done had been an amuſement rather than anything elſe; and when he left that much-loved region, with its cheerful drives and walks, and with all the tender aſſociations that reſted on it, — that tapeſtried the rooms of the old houſe and lighted up the whole landſcape, and its waters, woods, and hills, — he made the following ſimple record: —

Pepperell, October 28th. — Return to town to-morrow. The country is now in its ſplendid autumn robe, ſomewhat torn, however, and draggled by the rain. Have been occupied with corrections and additions to my "Mexico." On my return to Boſton ſhall reſume my labors on "Philip," and, if my health continues as good as it has been this ſummer, ſhall hope to make ſome progreſs. But I ſhall not preſs matters. Our *villeggiatura* has been brightened by the preſence of all the children and grandchildren, God bleſs them! And now we ſcatter again, but not far apart.

Theſe touching words are the laſt he ever wrote in the private Memoranda, which he had now kept above forty years, and there are no words in the whole maſs of above twelve hundred pages that are more expreſſive of what was peculiar

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to him. His domeſtic affections were always uppermoſt in his character, and never more ſo than they were in the laſt weeks and months of his life; indeed, I think, never ſo much and ſo manifeſtly. How he loved his children, — all his children, — how he delighted in his grandchildren, how he held them all "in his heart of heart," thoſe who moſt knew him, knew beſt.

On his return to Boſton, he looked ſtronger than he did when he left it four months earlier. His ſpirits were more natural; ſometimes as bright as they had ever been. He was in better fleſh, and his muſcular power was increaſed, although not much. But I think he never paſſed a day without a ſenſe of the ſhadow that he knew muſt always reſt on his way of life, whether it ſhould be long or ſhort.

During the firſt weeks after his coming to town, he was occupied with affairs that had accumulated during his abſence. As uſual, they ſomewhat wearied and annoyed him; perhaps more than they had on other ſimilar occaſions. But he diſmiſſed them from his thoughts as ſoon as he could, and then he ſeemed to turn with a ſort of irreſiſtible craving to the intellectual purſuits which long habit and conſcientious devotion to them had made ſo important to his happineſs.

About New Year of 1859, he ſpoke to me more than once of a change in his modes of life. He thought, as he told me, that, if his diet were made more nouriſhing, his general ſtrength would be improved, and he ſhould thus become capable of more labor in all ways, and eſpecially upon his "Philip the Second." On this, however, he did not venture. His obedience to his medical director was exact to the laſt. He reſtrained himſelf rigorouſly to a vegetable diet, and never took more wine than was preſcribed to him, as if it had been a medicine.

But he could not fully reſiſt the temptation of his old books and manuſcripts; nor was he altogether diſcouraged by his wiſe profeſſional adviſer from making an inconſiderable and wary experiment with them. Indeed, ſomething of the ſort ſeemed

to have become important for his health as well as for his ſpirits, which were now pining for the aliment that was demanded alike by his phyſical and moral conſtitution. During two or three weeks, therefore, he was occupied with that portion of the Hiſtory of Philip the Second with which his fourth volume would neceſſarily open. His reſearches, no doubt, were not as laborious as they had ſometimes been, when he was buſy with a difficult ſubject. They were, in fact, entirely prefatory, involving only the plan of an opening chapter, and the general mode in which that part of the war of the Netherlands might be diſcuſſed, to which the volume itſelf was to be largely devoted. Even in this, I believe, he was careful, and gave much leſs time to work than was his wont. But whenever he thought, he thought intently. He could not help it. It was a habit which he had cultivated with ſo much care, that he could not now ſhake it off. It is poſſible, therefore, that his occupations during theſe weeks were among the cauſes that haſtened the final event. But if they were, their influence muſt have been ſmall. Nothing gave token of what, from inſcrutable cauſes, was not only inevitable, but was near.

About a fortnight before his death, he ſuffered from an ague, which gave him ſo much pain, that it entirely interrupted his accuſtomed occupations. During the five or six days of its continuance, I ſpent the leiſure of each afternoon with him. His ſtrength was a good deal diminiſhed, and he was generally lying on his ſofa when I ſaw him; but never was he brighter or more agreeable, never more cheerful or more intereſting. And ſo it continued to the end. I ſaw him only twice or three times afterwards; but thoſe who were conſtantly with him, and watched every word and movement with affectionate ſolicitude, obſerved no change.

That his intellectual faculties were not affected, and that his temperament had loſt little of its charming gayety, the letters and memoranda of the year leave no doubt. They were not, I ſuppoſe, always written without effort, but the effort was ſucceſsful, which, in general, it would not have been, and in his

case was so in consequence mainly of the original elements that had been so gently mixed in his whole nature.

TO MR. BANCROFT.

Boston, February 19 (indorsed 1858).

DEAR BANCROFT,

It is well enough for a man to be ill sometimes, if it is only to show to him the affectionate sympathy of his friends, though in truth this was hardly necessary to prove yours. Two weeks since I had a slight touch of paralysis, which should have fallen on a man of more flesh than I can boast. It was so slight, however, that the doctor thinks there was no rupture of any vessel in the brain. The effects of it have passed off, excepting only some slight damage in that part of the cranium which holds proper names. I am somewhat reduced, as much perhaps in consequence of the diet I am put upon as the disease; for meat and generous wine are proscribed for the present.

Effects of apoplexy.

So you are to make your bow to the public in May; and the world, I have no doubt, as it shows signs of revival, will gladly wake from its winter's trance to receive you.

That is a charming paragraph which you have sent me, containing a letter wholly new to me,[2] and I look forward to the hours when I shall devour the coming volume, the one of greatest interest to me, and not one least difficult to you.

I hope your wife is in good health. Pray remember me most affectionately to her, and believe me

Ever faithfully your friend,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO MR. BANCROFT.

Boston, April 3, 1858.

I am truly obliged to you, my dear Bancroft, for sending me your account of Bunker Hill battle, in which I am so much interested.[3] I have read it with the greatest care and with equal pleasure. It was a difficult story to tell, considering how much it has been disfigured by feelings of personal rivalry and foolish

[2] A remarkable letter from Colonel Prescott, the historian's grandfather, to the Committee of Safety, in Boston, August, 1774. See Bancroft's History, Vol. VII. (1858,) p. 99. Mr. Bancroft possesses the autograph of this vigorous, patriotic document.

[3] At the end of Vol. VII. of Bancroft's History, 1858, sent in the proof-sheet to Mr. Prescott.

pretenſion. In my judgment, you have ſteered clear of all theſe difficulties, and have told the ſtory in a ſimple though eloquent ſtyle, that cannot fail to win the confidence of your reader, and ſatisfy him that you have written with no deſire but to tell the truth, after a careful ſtudy of the whole ground.

For the laſt thirty years or more the friends and kinſmen of the prominent chiefs in the action have been hunting up old Revolutionary ſurvivors, moſt of whom had ſurvived their own faculties, and extorting from them ſuch views as could carry no conviction to a candid mind. My father took no intereſt in all this, and made no effort to contradict the accounts thus given from time to time to the public. He thought, as I did, that theſe random ſtatements would make no permanent impreſſion on the public mind. He waited to ſee — what I, more fortunate than he, have now lived to ſee — an impartial account given of the action by the claſſical pen of the hiſtorian, whoſe writings are deſtined not merely for the preſent age, but for poſterity. While you have done entire juſtice to my grandfather, you have been ſcrupulous in giving due praiſe to Putnam and Warren, and to the latter in particular you have paid an eloquent tribute, well deſerved, and in your happieſt manner.

Controverſy about the battle of Bunker's Hill.

You are now entering on the moſt brilliant and faſcinating part of your grand ſubject, and I hope no political coquetry will have the power to entice you away in another direction until you have brought it to a completion. Since my apoplectic thump I have done nothing in the literary way, giving my wits a good chance to ſettle and come into their natural ſtate again. I am rather tired of this kind of loafing, and am now beginning to fall into the old track, — but with caution. As I am on a vegetable diet, though the doctor has allowed me to mend my cheer with a little wine, I may hope to be armed againſt any future attack.

With affectionate remembrances to your wife, believe me, my dear Bancroft,

Always faithfully your friend,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boſton, April 5, 1858.

MY DEAR LADY LYELL,

Suſan wrote you laſt week an account of my apoplectic troubles, in which you take ſo affectionate an intereſt. The attack was one wholly unexpected by me, for I had nothing about me except the headaches of laſt year, which looked in that direction. I am not a plethoric, red-viſaged gentleman, with a ſhort neck and a portly paunch "with good capon lined," ſeeming to invite the attack of ſuch an enemy. Nor am I yet turned of ſeventy, much leſs of eighty, when he takes advantage of decayed ſtrength to fall upon his ſuperannuated victim. But the fiend is no reſpecter of perſons or ages. Yet I muſt acknowledge he has dealt rather kindly with me. The blow cauſed ſome conſternation in my

Apoplexy.

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Diet.

little circle, by ſending my wits a wool-gathering for a few days. But they have gradually come to order again, and the worſt thing that now remains is the *anchoritiſh* fare of pulſe and water on which they have put me. Probably owing to this meagre diet more than to the diſeaſe, I have been ſomewhat reduced in ſtrength. But as the doctor has now reinforced my banquet with a couple of glaſſes of ſherry, I look confidently to regaining my former vigor, and gradually reſuming my hiſtorical labors, — amuſements I ſhould ſay, for the hardeſt thing to do is to do nothing. We are made happy now by the return of Amory, who is ſoon to be followed by William and his family, who will make one houſehold with us this ſummer at Lynn. It is a pleaſant reunion to look forward to after our long ſeparation. . . . . .

MEMORANDA.

April 18th, 1858. — More than five months ſince the laſt entry. During the firſt three I wrote text and notes of Book VI., Chapters I. and II., in all eighty-five pages print. On the 4th of February I had a ſlight apoplectic ſhock, which affected both ſight and power of motion, the laſt but for a few moments.

The attack — ſo unexpected, though I had been troubled with headaches through the winter, in a leſs degree, however, than in the preceding year — cauſed great alarm to my friends at firſt. Much reaſon have I to be grateful that the effects have gradually diſappeared, and left no traces now, except a ſlight obſcurity in the viſion, and a certain degree of weakneſs, which may perhaps be imputable to my change of diet. For I have been obliged to exchange my carnivorous propenſities for thoſe of a more innocent and primitive nature, picking up my fare as our good parents did before the fall. In this way it is thought I may defy the foul fiend for the future. But I muſt not make too heavy or long demands on the cranium, and if I can get three or four hours' work on my hiſtoric ground in a day, I muſt be content.

TO MR. PARSONS.[4]

Boſton, April 20, 1858.

DEAR THEOPH.,

I return you the vegetarian treatiſe, with many thanks. It furniſhes a moſt important contribution to kitchen literature. From the long time I have kept

[4] This note needs a little explanation, and I will give it in the words of the friend to whom it is addreſſed. He ſays: "I had been adviſed to eat mainly vegetable food; and, noticing among the advertiſements of London books one of a vegetarian cookery-book, I ordered it; and, when Preſcott told me that he was ſtrictly limited to a vegetable diet, I ſent it to him."

it, you might think I have been copying the receipts. I marked some for the purpose, but soon found them so numerous, that I concluded to send to London for the book itself. I shall receive a copy in a few days. I was very sorry to hear that you had wounded yourself with a pruning-knife, and I trust long before this you have got over the effects of it. This is an accident that cannot befall me. The more 's the pity. I wish with all my heart I could get up a little horticultural gusto, if it were only for multiplying and varying the pleasures of life.

God bless you, dear Theoph. Believe me, always affectionately yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boston, May 31, 1858.

MY DEAR LADY LYELL,

It was a loving remembrance in you, that of my birthday. It shows you have a good memory, at least for your friends. Threescore years and two is a venerable age, and should lead one to put his house in order, especially after such a thump on the cranium as I have had. I hope I shall round off threescore years and ten, at least, before I get another. I was greatly cheered the other day by finding in a biographical account of Adam Ferguson, that, after a severe paralytic shock at fifty, he survived on a vegetable diet to ninety-three, and wrote books, too, which people still continue to read. Indeed, it was thought that his vegetable fare served rather to clarify his wits. It is a very watery diet at any rate, better suited, I should say, to moral philosophy than to carnivorous history. Ferguson, however, wrote both.

Ferguson's apoplexy.

. . . . . .

I suppose in giddy London you don't get time to read much, that is, in the London season. Have you met with Bancroft's last volume, published at the beginning of the present month? It is occupied with a topic very interesting to us Yankees, and, in the closing chapters, does honor, of which it has been too long defrauded, to my grandfather, Colonel Prescott's memory. The book is written with spirit, but it is a pity he has not supported his story by a single note or reference. The reader must take it all on the writer's word. And yet his original materials are ample.

Bancroft's History.

I suppose you have read Buckle; indeed, Anna Ticknor told me that you liked him much. I am sure your husband must relish his acute and liberal-minded speculations, and especially the intrepidity with which he enters upon fields of discussion on which English writers are apt to tread so daintily, not to say timidly. He doubts in the true spirit of a philosopher. And yet he dogmatizes in a style the most opposed to philosophy. He would make a more agreeable impression if, with his doubts, he would now and then show a little doubt

Buckle's "Civilization."

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of himſelf. But whatever defects of manner he may have, I ſuppoſe few readers will deny that his big volume is the book of the age.

. . . . . .

I dined with the Ticknors laſt week; a quiet little meeting of only two or three gueſts. Everett, who was there, was in good trim. His Waſhington addreſs, with its concomitants, has done as much for him as for the Monument, by building him up. I have not ſeen him in ſo good condition for a long while. . . . . .

TO MADAME CALDERON.

Lynn, September 7, 1858.

MY DEAR MADAME CALDERON,

It is very long ſince I have exchanged a kindly greeting with you acroſs the waters, — not ſince your return to Spain. I have kept ſome knowledge of your whereabouts, however, but not as much as I could deſire, which nobody can give but yourſelf, — where you have been, where you are now ſtaying, what you are doing. Is my good friend Calderon ſtill coquetting with politics? Or is he living at eaſe, letting the world go by, like an honeſt cavalier, as I do? I hope, at all events, that both you and he are in good health, and in the enjoyment of all the happineſs that this world can give. You will tell me ſomething about all this when you write, won't you? For myſelf, I have been very well of late, though, during the laſt winter, in February, I experienced, what was little expected, an apoplectic attack. It alarmed my friends a good deal, and frightened me out of my wits for a time. But the effects have gradually paſſed off, leaving me only a ſlight increaſe of the obſcurity in my viſion. As I don't intend the foul fiend ſhall return again, I live upon vegetables and farinaceous matter, like the anchorites of old. For your apoplexy is a dangerous fellow, who lives upon good cheer, fat and red-faced gentlemen, who feed upon ſomething better than beets and carrots. I don't care about the fare, but I ſhould be ſorry not to give the laſt touches to Philip the Prudent, and to leave him in the world in a diſmembered condition! I am amuſing myſelf now with putting through the preſs the third volume. This will make three fifths of the whole work. Five volumes are as heavy a load as poſterity will be willing to take upon its ſhoulders; and I am ambitious enough to conſign my wares to poſterity. The book will make its appearance in December, and will give you and Calderon ſome winter evenings' readings, if you are not too much abſorbed in the affairs of the public to have time for private matters. I am juſt now occupied with making ſome notes and corrections for a new edition of the "Conqueſt of Mexico." I have particularly good materials for this in the two Mexican tranſlations of it, one of them having Alaman's notes, and the other thoſe of Ramirez. I know very little about theſe eminent ſcholars, though I have ſomewhere a notice which was ſent me of Alaman, put away ſo carefully and ſo long ago that I doubt if I can lay my hands on it. Could you not give me ſome little account of theſe

Apoplexy.

"Philip the Second."

"Conqueſt of Mexico."

two worthies, — of the offices they hold, their ſocial poſition, and general eſtimation? Ramirez ſomewhere remarks that he belongs to the old Mexican race. This explains the difference of his views on ſome points from Alaman's, who has a true love for the "Conquiſtadores." On the whole, it is a trial, which few hiſtorians have experienced, to be ſubjected to ſo ſevere a criticiſm, ſentence by ſentence, of two of the moſt eminent ſcholars of their country. Though they have picked many holes in my finery, I cannot deny that they have done it in the beſt ſpirit and in the moſt courtly ſtyle. . . . . .

TO THE EARL OF CARLISLE.

Boſton, December 27, 1858.

MY DEAR CARLISLE,

My eye was caught by the ſight of your name this morning, as I was running over the columns of my daily paper, and I read an extract from a late addreſs of yours at Hull, not ſo complimentary as I could have wiſhed to my own country. The tone of remark, differing a good deal from the uſual ſtyle of your remarks on us, is, I fear, not undeſerved. The more 's the pity. I ſend you the extracts, for, as I ſuppoſe you intended it for our edification as well as for your own countrymen, I thought you might be pleaſed to ſee that it was quoted here. At any rate, I imagine you will be gratified with the candid and liberal ſtyle in which it is received. The Boſton "Daily Advertiſer" is one of our moſt reſpectable journals, and I may add that the opinions expreſſed in it perfectly coincide with thoſe of ſeveral well-informed perſons who have ſpoken to me on the matter, and for whoſe judgment you would entertain reſpect.

Lord Carliſle's opinions of the United States.

I am not willing, any more than the editor is, to agree with you in your deſponding views as to the deſtinies of our country, and I ſhould mourn for my race if I thought that the grand experiment we are making of the capacity of men for ſelf-government ſhould prove a failure. We muſt not be too haſtily judged. We are a young people, and have been tried by the ſevereſt of all trials, uninterrupted proſperity; a harder trial than adverſity for a nation as well as for an individual. We have many men of high intelligence as well as ſound principle in the country, and, ſhould exigencies ariſe to call them into action, I cannot doubt that they would take the place of the vaporing politicians who have been allowed too much to direct the affairs of the republic.

I have juſt come out with a third volume of "Philip the Second," and I hope ere this you have received a copy which I directed my publiſher, Routledge, to ſend you at once.

Should he not have done ſo, you will oblige me much by advertiſing me of it, as I wiſh you to have all my literary bantlings from my own hand. I have done myſelf the pleaſure alſo to ſend a copy to the Ducheſs and Lady Mary. I truſt that you and yours are all in good health.

This reminds me of a blank in your circle, one dear and revered name, which

I never omitted when I wrote to you. She has gone to a better world than this. I must thank you for sending me, through Everett, the miniature photograph of her, surprisingly like, considering the size. Pray remember me kindly to the Duchess and to Lady Mary, when you see them. My son and daughter desire their kindest remembrances to you, with which, believe me, my dear friend, always

Affectionately yours,

Wm. H. Prescott.

TO LADY LYELL.

Boston, January 10, 1859.

My dear Lady Lyell,

Invitation to England.

I must not let another packet go without thanking you for the friendly invitation given by you and your husband to Susan and myself to visit you this spring; and although it will not be in our power to accept it, you will believe that we are not the less grateful to the loving hearts which dictated it. You, who put a girdle round the earth in as little time almost as Puck, can have no idea of the way in which we have struck our roots in the soil, as immovable as the great tree on the Common. As to my wife, a voyage to the moon would not be more chimerical in her eyes than a trip (as they pleasantly call it) across the Atlantic. She will die, without ever having got so far as New York. I do hope, however, that we are not destined never to meet again, though I think it must be in your husband's pursuit after science. The book of nature is a big one, and there are some pages in it on American antiquities which he has not yet read, I suppose. At all events, I hope we shall meet again in this lower world, before we get to the land of spirits. We should like to see each other in the form to which we have been accustomed, not in the guise of a shadow, or of a flickering flame, as Dante put his loving souls into the Inferno. Such a meeting would be only of the voice, without even a friendly grasp of the hand, to make the heart beat. It would be like a talk between friends, after a long absence on the different sides of a partition to divide them. Yet if we don't meet before long, I don't know, but I should rather postpone the interview till we have crossed the Styx. But you, I am told, are reversing the order of nature. I wonder where you got your recipe for it. Yet the youth of the body is, after all, easier to preserve than the youth of the soul. I should like a recipe for that. Life is so stale when one has been looking at it for more than sixty winters! It would be a miracle if the blood were not a little chilled. . . . . .

FROM MR. IRVING.

Sunnyside, January 12, 1859.

My dear Mr. Prescott,

"Philip the Second." I cannot thank you enough for the third volume of your "Philip," which you have had the kindness to send me. It came most opportunely to occupy and interest me when rather depressed by indisposition. I have read with great interest your account of the Rebellion of the Moriscoes, which took me among the Alpuxarras mountains, which I once traversed with great delight. It is a sad story, the trampling down and expulsion of that gallant race from the land they won so bravely and cultivated and adorned with such industry, intelligence, and good taste. You have done ample justice to your subject.

The battle of Lepanto is the splendid picture of your work, and has never been so admirably handled.

I congratulate you on the achievement of the volume, which forms a fine variety from the other parts of your literary undertakings.

Giving you my best wishes that you may go on and prosper, I remain, my dear Mr. Prescott,

Yours ever truly and heartily,

Washington Irving.

Wm. H. Prescott, Esq.

FROM LORD MACAULAY.[5]

Holly Lodge, Kensington, January 8, 1859.

My dear Sir,

"Philip the Second." I have already delayed too long to thank you for your third volume. It is excellent, and, I think, superior to anything that you have written, parts of the "History of the Conquest of Mexico" excepted. Most of those good judges whose voices I have been able to collect, at this dead time of the year, agree with me. This is the season when, in this country, friends interchange good wishes. I do not know whether that fashion has crossed the Atlantic. Probably not, for your Pilgrim Fathers held it to be a sin to keep Christmas and Twelfth Day. I hope, however, that you will allow me to express my hope that the year which is beginning may be a happy one to you.

Ever yours truly,

Macaulay.

Wm. H. Prescott, Esq., &c. &c.

[5] This letter Mr. Prescott never had the pleasure of reading. It arrived a few days after his death.

TO SIR CHARLES LYELL.

Boſton, January 23, 1859.

MY DEAR SIR CHARLES,

I have had the pleaſure of receiving your friendly letter of December 31ſt, and muſt thank you for another, in which you ſo kindly invited my wife and me to viſit you in England. Nothing, you may well believe, could give her and myſelf greater pleaſure than to paſs ſome time under your hoſpitable roof, which would afford me the inexpreſſible ſatisfaction of taking ſome friends again by the hand, whoſe faces I would give much to ſee. But I have long ſince abandoned the thought of croſſing the great water, and the friends on the other ſide of it are, I fear, henceforth to find a place with me only in the pleaſures of memory. And pleaſant recollections they afford to fill many an hour which the world would call idle, for there is neither fame nor money to be made out of them. But one who has croſſed ſixty (how near are you to that ominous line?) will have found out that there is ſomething of more worth than fame or money in this world. I was laſt evening with Agaſſiz, who was in capital ſpirits at the proſpect of opening to the public a project of a great muſeum, for which Frank Gray, as I ſuppoſe you know, left an appropriation of fifty thouſand dollars. There will be a ſubſcription ſet on foot, I underſtand, for raiſing a ſimilar ſum to provide a ſuitable building for the collection, — a great part of which has already been formed by Agaſſiz himſelf, — and the Governor, at a meeting of the friends of the ſcheme held the other evening at James Lawrence's, gave the moſt cordial aſſurances of ſubſtantial aid from the State. Agaſſiz expreſſed the greateſt confidence to me of being able in a few years to eſtabliſh an inſtitution, which would not ſhrink from compariſon with ſimilar eſtabliſhments in Europe. He has been ſuffering of late from inflammation of the eyes, a trouble to which he is unaccuſtomed, but for which he may thank his own imprudence. I am glad to learn that you are purſuing, with your uſual energy, your ſtudies on Ætna. The ſubject is one of the greateſt intereſt. I muſt congratulate you on the reception of the Copley medal. However we may deſpiſe, or affect to deſpiſe, the vulgar *volitare per ora*, it is a ſatisfaction to find one's labors appreciated by the few who are competent to pronounce on their value.

Agaſſiz.

Good by, my dear Lyell. With kindeſt remembrances to your wife, believe me always faithfully yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

This is the lateſt letter from my friend that has come to my knowledge. Notes he continued to write afterwards. I received ſeveral ſuch down to within two or three days of his death, and others, I doubt not, were ſent to other perſons in kindneſs or on buſineſs at the ſame period. In this and in all

reſpects, he went on as uſual. He ſeemed to himſelf to grow better and better, and was even in a condition to enjoy ſome of the pleaſures of ſociety. We had occaſionally dined at each other's houſes from the preceding ſpring, as he has noticed in his letters to Lady Lyell, already inſerted; and, leſs than a week before his death, I was to have met a ſmall party of friends at his own table. But a family affliction prevented his hoſpitality, and I was afterwards glad, as I well might be, that the dinner did not take place. Not that he would have failed in abſtinence; but he was leſs ſtrong than he believed himſelf to be, and leſs than we all hoped he was, ſo that the fatal blow then impending might, by the excitement of merely ſocial intercourſe, have fallen ſooner than it otherwiſe would, or, at leaſt, we might afterwards have believed that it had.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1859.

Anxiety to return to ſerious Work. — Pleaſant Forenoon. — Sudden Attack of Apoplexy. — Death. — His Wiſhes reſpecting his Remains. — Funeral. — Expreſſions of Sorrow on both ſides of the Atlantic.

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FROM day to day, after New Year of 1859, he ſeemed more to miſs his old occupations. On the 27th of January, he talked decidedly of beginning again in good earneſt his work on the "Hiſtory of Philip the Second," and ſpeculated on the queſtion whether, if he ſhould find his phyſical ſtrength unequal to the needful exertion, he might venture to reinforce it by a freer diet. On the following morning — the fatal day — he talked of it again, as if his mind were made up to the experiment, and as if he were looking forward to his taſk as to the opening again of an old and ſure mine of content. His ſiſter, Mrs. Dexter, was happily in town making him a viſit, and was ſitting that forenoon with Mrs. Preſcott in a dreſſing-room, not far from the ſtudy where his regular work was always done. He himſelf, in the early part of the day, was unoccupied, walking about his room for a little exerciſe; the weather being ſo bad that none ventured out who could well avoid it. Mr. Kirk, his ever-faithful ſecretary, was looking over Sala's lively book about Ruſſia, "A Journey due North," for his own amuſement merely, but

occaſionally reading aloud to Mr. Preſcott ſuch portions as he thought peculiarly intereſting or pleaſant. On one paſſage, which referred to a former Miniſter of Ruſſia at Waſhington, he pauſed, becauſe neither of them could recollect the name of the perſon alluded to; and Mr. Preſcott, who did not like to find his memory at fault, went to his wife and ſiſter to ſee if either of them could recall it for him. After a moment's heſitation, Mrs. Preſcott hit upon it; a circumſtance which amuſed him not a little, as ſhe ſo rarely took an intereſt in anything connected with public affairs, that he had rather counted upon Mrs. Dexter for the information. He ſnapped his fingers at her, therefore, as he turned away, and, with the merry laugh ſo characteriſtic of his nature, paſſed out of the room, ſaying, as he went, "How came *you* to remember?" They were the laſt words ſhe ever heard from his loved lips.

After reaching his ſtudy, he ſtepped into an adjoining apartment. While there, Mr. Kirk heard him groan, and, hurrying to him, found him ſtruck with apoplexy and wholly unconſcious. This was about half paſt eleven o'clock in the forenoon. He was inſtantly carried to his chamber. In the ſhorteſt poſſible ſpace of time, ſeveral medical attendants were at his bedſide, and among them — and the chief of them — was his old friend and his father's friend, Dr. Jackſon. One of their number, Dr. Minot, brought me the ſad intelligence, adding his own auguries, which were of the worſt. I haſtened to the houſe. What grief and diſmay I found there need not to be told. All ſaw that the inevitable hour was come. Remedies availed nothing. He never ſpoke again, never recovered an inſtant of conſciousneſs, and at half paſt two o'clock life paſſed away without ſuffering. January the 28th.

He would himſelf have preferred ſuch a death, if choice had been permitted to him. He had often ſaid ſo to me and to others; and none will gainſay, that it was a great happineſs thus to die, ſurrounded by all thoſe neareſt and deareſt to him, except one much-loved ſon, who was at a diſtance, and to die, too, with unimpaired faculties, and with affections not

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only as freſh and true as they had ever been, but which, in his own home and in the innermoſt circle of his friends, had ſeemed to grow ſtronger and more tender to the laſt.

Four days afterwards he was buried; two wiſhes, however, having firſt been fulfilled, as he had earneſtly deſired that they ſhould be. They related wholly to himſelf, and were as ſimple and unpretending as he was.

From accidental circumſtances, he had always entertained a peculiar dread of being buried alive; and he had, therefore, often required that meaſures ſhould be taken to prevent all poſſibility of the horrors that might follow ſuch an occurrence. His injunctions were obeyed. Of his abſolute death it was not, indeed, permitted to doubt. It had occurred under circumſtances which had been diſtinctly foreſeen, and by a blow only too obvious, ſure, and terrible. But ſtill, as had been promiſed to him, a principal vein was ſevered, ſo that, if life ſhould again be awakened, it might ebb ſilently away without any poſſible return of conſciouſneſs.

His other requeſt was no leſs natural and characteriſtic. He deſired that his remains, before they ſhould be depoſited in the houſe appointed for all living, might reſt, for a time, in the cheriſhed room where were gathered the intellectual treaſures amidſt which he had found ſo much of the happineſs of his life. And this wiſh, too, was fulfilled. Silently, noiſeleſſly, he was carried there. Few witneſſed the ſolemn ſcene, but on thoſe who did, it made an impreſſion not to be forgotten. There he lay, in that rich, fair room, — his manly form neither ſhrunk nor waſted by diſeaſe; the features that had expreſſed and inſpired ſo much love ſtill hardly touched by the effacing fingers of death, — there he lay, in unmoved, inacceſſible peace; and the lettered dead of all ages and climes and countries collected there ſeemed to look down upon him in their earthly immortality, and claim that his name ſhould hereafter be imperiſhably aſſociated with theirs.

But this was only for a ſeaſon. At the appointed hour — his family, and none elſe, following — he was borne to the church

where he was wont to worſhip. No ceremonies had been arranged for the occaſion. There had been no invitations. There was no ſhow. But the church was full, was crowded. The Repreſentatives of the Commonwealth, then in ſeſſion, had adjourned ſo as to be preſent; the members of the Hiſtorical Society, whoſe honored wiſh to take official charge of the duties of the occaſion had been declined, were there as mourners. The whole community was moved; the poor whom he had befriended; the men of letters with whom he had been aſſociated or whom he had aided; the elevated by place or by fortune, whoſe diſtinctions and happineſs he had increaſed by ſharing them; — they were all there. It was a ſorrowful gathering, ſuch as was never before witneſſed in this land for the obſequies of any man of letters wholly unconnected, as he had been, with public affairs and the parties or paſſions of the time; — one who was known to moſt of the crowd collected around his bier only by the ſilent teachings of his printed works. For, of the multitude aſſembled, few could have known him perſonally; many of them had never ſeen him. But all came to mourn. All felt that an honor had been taken from the community and the country. They came becauſe they felt the loſs they had ſuſtained, and only for that. And after the ſimple and ſolemn religious rites befitting the occaſion had been performed,[1] they ſtill crowded round the funeral train and through the ſtreets, following, with ſadneſs and awe, the hearſe that was bearing from their ſight all that remained of one who had been watched not a week before as he trod the ſame ſtreets in apparent happineſs and health. It was a grand and touching tribute to intellectual eminence and perſonal worth.

He was buried with his father and mother, and with the little daughter he had ſo tenderly loved, in the family tomb under St. Paul's Church; and, as he was laid down beſide them, the audible ſobs of the friends who filled that gloomy

[1] By Mr. Preſcott's clergyman, the Rev. Rufus Ellis, paſtor of the Firſt Congregational Church in Boſton.

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crypt bore witneſs to their love for his generous and ſweet nature, even more than to their admiration for his literary diſtinctions, or to their ſenſe of the honor he had conferred on his country.

Other expreſſions of the general feeling followed. The Maſſachuſetts Hiſtorical Society; the Hiſtorical Societies of New York, of Pennſylvania, of Maryland, and of Illinois; the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; the American Antiquarian Society; the New England Genealogical Society; the Eſſex Inſtitute, meeting on the ſpot where he was born; and the Boſton Athenæum and Harvard College, with which, from his youth, he had been much connected, — each bore its eſpecial and appropriate part in the common mourning. The multitudinous periodicals and newſpapers of the country were filled with it, and the ſame tone was ſoon afterwards heard from no ſmall portion of what is moſt eminent for intellectual cultivation in Europe. There was no diviſion of opinion. There was no diſſentient, no heſitating voice, on either ſide of the Atlantic. All ſorrowfully felt that a great loſs had been ſuſtained; that a brilliant and beneficent light had been extinguiſhed.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX A.

THE PRESCOTT FAMILY.

(See p. 1.)

THE Prefcott family belong to the original Puritan ſtock and blood of New England. They came from Lancaſhire, and about 1640, twenty years only after the firſt ſettlement at Plymouth and ten years after that of Boſton, were eſtabliſhed in Middleſex County, Maſſachuſetts, where not a few of the honored race ſtill remain.

Like moſt of the earlier emigrants, who left their native homes from conſcientious motives, they were men of ſtrongly marked characters, but of ſmall eſtates, and devoted to mechanical and agricultural purſuits, — circumſtances which fitted them as nothing elſe could ſo well have done for the trials and labors incident to their ſettlement in this Weſtern wilderneſs. But, even among men like theſe, the Preſcotts were diſtinguiſhed from the firſt. They enjoyed, to an uncommon degree, the reſpect of the community which they helped to found, and became at once more or leſs concerned in the management of the entire Colony of Maſſachuſetts, when thoſe who took part in its affairs bore heavy burdens and led anxious lives.

APPENDIX A.

John Preſcott.

John, the firſt emigrant, was a large, able-bodied man, who, after living ſome time in Watertown, eſtabliſhed himſelf in Lancaſter, then on the frontiers of civilization. There he acquired a good eſtate and defended it bravely from the incurſions of the Indians, to whom he made himſelf formidable by occaſionally appearing before them in a helmet and cuiraſs, which he had brought with him from England, where he was ſaid to have ſerved under Cromwell. His death is placed in 1683.

Of him are recorded by Mr. William Preſcott, father of the hiſtorian, the following traditionary anecdotes, — given him by Dr. Oliver Preſcott, — which may ſerve, at leaſt, to mark the condition of the times when he lived.

"He brought over," ſays Mr. Preſcott, "a coat of mail-armor and habiliments, ſuch as were uſed by field-officers of that time. An aged lady informed Mr. Oliver Preſcott [1] that ſhe had ſeen him dreſſed in this armor. Lancaſter (where Mr. Preſcott eſtabliſhed himſelf) was a frontier town, much expoſed to the incurſions of the Indians. John was a ſturdy, ſtrong man, with a ſtern countenance, and, whenever he had a difficulty with the Indians, clothed himſelf with his coat of armor, — helmet, cuiraſs, and gorget, — which gave him a fierce and frightful appearance. It is related, that when, on one occaſion, they ſtole a valuable horſe from him, he put on his armor and purſued them, and after ſome time overtook the party that had his horſe. They were ſurpriſed to ſee him alone, and one of the chiefs approached him with his tomahawk uplifted. John told him to ſtrike, which he did, and, finding the blow made no impreſſion on his cap, he was aſtoniſhed, and aſked John to let him put it on, and then to ſtrike on his head, as he had done on John's. The helmet was too ſmall for the Indian's head, and the weight of the blow ſettled it down to his ears, ſcraping off the ſkin on both ſides. They gave him his horſe, and let him go, thinking him a ſupernatural being.

"At another time the Indians ſet fire to his barn. Old John put on his armor and ruſhed out upon them. They retreated before him, and he let his horſes and cattle out of the burning ſtable. At another time they ſet fire to his ſaw-mill. The old man armed *cap-à-pied*, went out, drove them off, and extinguiſhed the fire."

Jonas Preſcott.

Jonas, a ſon of the firſt emigrant, was born in 1648, and died in 1723, ſeventy-five years old. He lived in Groton. He was a captain of the yeomanry militia, at a time when the neighborhood of the ſavages made ſuch a poſt important to the ſafety of the country, and he was a juſtice of the peace when that office, alſo, implied a degree of conſideration and authority now unknown to it.

Benjamin Preſcott.

Benjamin, one of the ſons of Jonas, was born January 4, 1695–6. He repreſented his native town many years in the General Court of the Colony, was a colonel in the militia of his own county, and of the adjoining county of Worceſter, and in the year before his death, which occurred in 1738, was delegated to the important ſervice of defending the territorial rights of Maſſachuſetts againſt the claims of New Hampſhire, before a royal commiſſion appointed to adjudge the caſe.[2]

[1] Born in 1731, and died in 1804.

[2] This has ſometimes been otherwiſe ſtated, but the record leaves no doubt upon the matter. See Journal of the Houſe of Repreſentatives, Auguſt 12th, and October 13th, 1737.

Benjamin had three sons, each of whom distinguished himself in the line of life he had chosen.

James Prescott.

The eldest, James, remained on the family estate at home, and cultivated and managed it. He passed through all the degrees of military rank, from that of an ensign to that of colonel. He represented Groton, for a long period, in the General Court, and was afterwards in the Colonial Governor's Council. At the outbreak of the Revolution, taking the popular side, he became a member of the Provincial Congress and of the Board of War, and, after the peace of 1783, was successively sheriff of the county and Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. He died, more than seventy-nine years old, in 1800, at Groton, where the family had then been settled above a century.

Oliver Prescott.

Oliver, the youngest son of Benjamin, was born in 1731. He was graduated at Harvard College in 1750, and became subsequently an eminent physician in Groton and its neighborhood. But, like others of his family, he turned to public affairs, both military and civil. In 1777, and for several years afterwards, he was of the Governor's Council, and in 1778 he became one of the major-generals in the service of the Commonwealth. A severe illness in 1781 somewhat impaired his activity, and the same year he was appointed Judge of Probate for his native county of Middlesex, an office which he held, to the great acceptance of all, till his death. He, however, never ceased to be interested in his original profession, and, besides other marks of distinction for his medical knowledge, he received in 1791 the degree of Doctor in Medicine, *honoris causâ*, from Harvard College. He died in 1804, leaving several sons, the eldest of whom, Oliver, delivered an address before the Massachusetts Medical Society in 1813, on the *Secale cornutum* or *ergot*, which was found so important in relation to the use of that remedy, that, besides being reprinted in this country and in London, it was translated into French and German, and inserted in the thirteenth volume of the *Dictionnaire des Sciences Médicales*. He died at Newburyport in 1827.

William Prescott, grandfather to the historian.

William, the second son of Benjamin, and grandfather of the historian, was of a more bold and enterprising nature than his brother James, and has left a name which will not be forgotten. He was born in Groton on the 20th of February, 1726; but, in a spirit of adventure common throughout New England at that period, and not yet unknown, he preferred to remove farther into the land and establish himself in the primeval forest. This he did, before he was of age. But it was not necessary for him to go far. He removed only a few miles, and afterwards, when he had served as a soldier, caused the land on a part of which he had settled to be made a township, naming it after Sir William Pepperell, who had just then so much distinguished himself by the capture of Louisbourg. Pepperell is in the upper part of the county of Middlesex, just on the line of the State, and next to the town of Hollis, which is in New Hampshire. There, not above a mile from the border, he always lived, — or at least he always had his only home there, — holding his estate, as his great-grandson continues to hold it still in 1862, under the original Indian title. The Indians, indeed, long continued to be his near neighbors; so near, that there were periods of anxiety, during which those who went to the field with the plough did not feel safe unless their rifles stood leaned against the neighboring trees.

Establishes himself in Pepperell.

APPENDIX A.

Serves in the army.

This was a rude training, no doubt; and living, as he did, among the ſavages, an unmarried man, it ſeems early to have given him ſoldierlike habits and taſtes. At any rate, when he was twenty-ſeven years old, he was a lieutenant in the militia, and at twenty-nine, in the true ſpirit of adventure, entered, with the ſame rank, the regular ſervice in the Colonial troops ſent to remove the French from Nova Scotia. This was in 1755. But the ſervice was a ſhort, and not an agreeable one. On his return home, therefore, he left the army, and married Abigail Hale, a deſcendant, like himſelf, of the original Puritan ſtock of the country. It was a fortunate connection for the young ſoldier, who now ſeemed to have ſettled down on his farm for a peaceful and happy life, retaining only ſo much of his military taſtes as was implied by accepting the command of the yeomanry of his neighborhood.

Adheres to the patriotic party.

But troubleſome times ſoon followed, and a ſpirit like his was ſure to be ſtirred by them. This he early permitted to be ſeen and known. In Auguſt, 1774, he counſelled his aſſembled townſmen to ſtand by the men of Boſton in their reſiſtance to the unjuſt and unconſtitutional claims of the royal authority, and embodied their thoughts and purpoſes in a fervent letter which is ſtill extant. "Be not diſmayed," he ſaid, "nor diſheartened in this day of great trials. We heartily ſympathize with you, and are always ready to do all in our power for your ſupport, comfort, and relief, knowing that Providence has placed you where you muſt ſtand the firſt ſhock. We conſider, we are all embarked in one bottom, and muſt ſink or ſwim together."[3] Soon afterwards, in 1775, being recognized as a good ſoldier, who in Nova Scotia had become familiar with the diſcipline of a camp, and being, beſides, no leſs known for his political firmneſs, he was made colonel of a regiment of minute-men, who, as their name implies, were to be ready at a moment's warning for any revolutionary emergency. It was a duty he loved, and it was not long before his courage and firmneſs were put to the teſt.[4]

Made a colonel.

3 Bancroft's "Hiſtory of the United States," Vol. VII. (Boſton, 1858), p. 99. This is the document already alluded to, (*ante*, p. 432, note,) as ſent by Mr. Bancroft to Mr. Preſcott the hiſtorian.

4 Two circumſtances in relation to this commiſſion are worth notice. The firſt is, that, with a diſregard to exactneſs not uncommon in times of great peril, the month and day of the month when the commiſſion was iſſued are not given. The other is, that the Preſident of "the Congreſs of the Colony of the Maſſachuſetts Bay" who ſigned it is General Joſeph Warren, who fell a few days later on Bunker Hill; and the juſtice of the peace before whom, on the 26th of May, 1775, Colonel Preſcott took the oath of allegiance, was Samuel Dexter, one of the leading men of the Colony, — the grandfather of Mr. Franklin Dexter, who, nearly half a century later, married a granddaughter of the ſame Colonel Preſcott, — a man of ſevere integrity, and of an original, ſtrong, uncompromiſing character, who, during the ſhort period in which his health allowed him to occupy himſelf with political affairs, exerciſed no ſmall influence in the troubled commonwealth. A notice of him, by his ſon, the eminent lawyer, who died in 1816, may be found in the Monthly Anthology for 1810. Mr. Dexter, the elder, was the founder of the Dexter Lecture ſhip of Biblical Literature in Harvard College. At the time when he ſigned the commiſſion of Colonel Preſcott, he was a member of the Provincial Congreſs. Colonel Preſcott, it ſhould be noted, ſerved as colonel before

On the 19th of April, 1775, within an hour after the news reached him of the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord, he hurried to Groton, and, collecting as many of his men as he could muster, and leaving orders for the rest to follow, marched to Cambridge, hoping to overtake the British troops, then in full retreat towards Boston. This, however, was impossible. But a force, full of the active and devoted spirit of the time, was rapidly collected at Cambridge, under the command of General Artemas Ward. By his orders, Colonel Prescott was despatched on the evening of June the 16th, with about a thousand men, to Charlestown, where, in the course of the night, he threw up a redoubt on Bunker's Hill, — or to speak more accurately on Breed's Hill, — and fought there, the next day, the first real battle of the Revolution, manfully putting in peril that reputation, which, to a soldier, is dearer than life, and which, if the cause he then espoused had failed, would have left his own name and that of his descendants blackened with the charge of rebellion. But things did not so turn out. He was, indeed, defeated, — mainly for want of ammunition, — and driven from the hill, which he was among the last to leave. A brave resistance, however, had been made, and the defeat had many of the results of a victory. When Washington heard of it, he exclaimed, "The liberties of the country are safe";[5] and Franklin wrote, "England has lost her Colonies forever."[6]

Battle at Lexington.

Battle of Bunker's Hill.

Colonel Prescott continued in the army until the end of 1776,[7] when, on the retirement of the American troops from Long Island, the excellent manner in which he brought off his regiment was publicly commended by General Washington. But from this period until his death, except during the autumn of 1777, when, as a volunteer with a few of his former brother-officers, he assisted in the capture of Burgoyne at Saratoga, he resided on his farm in Pepperell. He did not, however, withdraw himself entirely from public affairs. He served as a Representative in the Legislature of Massachusetts, and when the formidable insurrection known as "Shays's Rebellion" broke out in his own county of Middlesex, he hastened to Concord and assisted in protecting the courts of justice, and in preserving law and order. He died on the 13th of October, 1795, and was buried with the military honors becoming his life and character. His widow, an admirable person, full of gentleness and dignity, survived him many years, and died in 1821, at the advanced age of eighty-eight.

Returns to Pepperell.

His death.

They had but one child, William, who was born on his father's farm, August the 19th, 1762, and lived there, in great simplicity, until 1776. His early education was entirely due to his mother, for whom he always felt a deep reverence, and of whom, late in his own life, he said: "She was more remarkable, than any one I have ever known, for her power of governing children and young people, and that without any austerity in her manner. They all respected, loved, and obeyed

William Prescott, father of the historian.

he took the oath, namely, as early as the month of April.

[5] Irving's "Life of Washington" (1855), Vol. I. p. 488.

[6] The last words of Vol. VII. of Bancroft's "History of the United States" (1858).

[7] His commission in the army of "The United Colonies," signed by John Hancock, President, and Charles Thomson, Secretary, is dated January 1, 1776, and constitutes him Colonel of the "Seventh Regiment of Foot."

Appendix A.

her. Her kindneſs won their hearts. I feel that I am indebted to her wife and affectionate government and guidance of my childhood and youth, — her daily counſels and inſtructions, — for whatever character and ſucceſs I may have had in life." Conſidering what Mr. Preſcott had become when he wrote theſe words, a more beautiful tribute could hardly have been paid to womanly tenderneſs and wiſdom.

Early training.

But, at the age of fourteen, he was placed under the inſtruction of "Maſter Moody," of Dummer Academy, in Eſſex County, then known as the beſt teacher of Latin and Greek in New England, and — what was of no leſs conſequence to his pupils — wholly devoted to his duties, which he loved paſſionately. Nearly three years of careful training under ſuch an inſtructor almoſt changed the boy to a man, and four years more at Harvard College, where he was graduated in 1783, completed the transformation.

Independence of character.

But as he approached manhood, he felt the reſponſibilities of life already crowding upon him. The firſt of theſe, and probably the one that preſſed heavieſt upon his thoughts, was the idea that, for the ſeven preceding years, he had been a burden upon the ſmall means of his father, when he might rather have been a relief. This ſtate of things he determined at once ſhould no longer continue, and, from that moment, he never received any pecuniary aſſiſtance from his family. On the contrary, after the death of his father, whoſe life, like that of moſt military men of his time, had been one of generous hoſpitality, rather than of thrift, he aſſumed the debts with which the eſtate had become encumbered, and, for above a quarter of a century, made the moſt ample and affectionate arrangements for the ſupport of his much-loved mother, who thus died in peace and happineſs on the ſpot where ſhe had lived above ſixty years.

Keeps ſchool.

His earlieſt reſource, when he began the world for himſelf, was one then common among us, and ſtill not very rare, for young men who have left college without the means neceſſary to continue their education further. He became a teacher. At firſt, it was for a few months only, in Brooklyn, Connecticut; but afterwards for two years in Beverly, Maſſachuſetts. Here he lived very happily in a cultivated ſociety, and here he ſtudied his profeſſion under Mr. Dane, a learned juriſt and ſtateſman, who afterwards founded the Law Profeſſorſhip in Harvard College that bears his name. During this period Mr. Preſcott received an invitation to become a member of General Waſhington's houſehold, where, while purſuing his legal ſtudies, he would have acted as the private tutor of a youthful member of the family, to whom its great head was much attached. But the young law-ſtudent declined the offer, in conſequence of his previous engagements, and his college claſſmate, Lear, took the coveted place.

Invited to General Waſhington's houſehold.

Practiſes law in Beverly and Salem.

Mr. Preſcott began the practice of his profeſſion in Beverly; but, at the end of two years, in 1789, finding the field there not wide enough for his purpoſes, he removed to the adjacent town of Salem, the ſhire town of the county, and the ſeat of much proſperous activity. His ſucceſs, from the firſt, was marked and honorable, and it continued ſuch ſo long as he remained there. During a part of the time, he entered a little, but only a little, into political life, ſerving ſucceſſively as a Repreſentative of Salem and as a Senator for the county of

Political opinions.

Effex in the Legiſlature of the State. But, although he took no ſelfiſh intereſt in the ſucceſs of any party, he maintained then, as he did till his death, the opinions of the Federaliſts, who received their name from an early and faithful ſupport of the Federal Conſtitution, and who ſubſequently devoted themſelves to ſuſtaining the policy and meaſures of Waſhington during his civil adminiſtration of the affairs of the country. In truth, however, while Mr. Preſcott lived in Salem, he gave himſelf up almoſt excluſively to his profeſſion, in which his talents, his integrity, and his induſtry gained for him ſo high a rank, that, as early as 1806, he was offered a ſeat on the bench of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth; an offer repeated with much urgency in 1813, but one which, on both occaſions, he declined, partly from the ſtate of his family, but chiefly from conſiderations connected with his health. His refuſal occaſioned no little regret, for it was a place to which he was admirably adapted by the judicial character of his mind, by his moral courage, and by a ſingular power he had of holding any ſubject under adviſement until the laſt moment, and then deciding it as promptly and firmly as if he had never heſitated.

Declines a judgeſhip.

His infirm health.

But from 1803, when he ruptured a bloodveſſel in his lungs, and was compelled, in conſequence, to give up all ſevere occupation for many months, he was never an active or vigorous man. To relieve himſelf, therefore, from a kind of buſineſs which was quite as onerous as it was profitable, and which made his life in Salem more burdenſome than he could well bear, he determined, in 1808, to remove to Boſton. He did ſo, however, with reluctance. He had many kind friends in Salem, to whom he and his family were ſincerely attached. He had paſſed there nineteen years of great profeſſional uſefulneſs, enjoying the reſpect of a very intelligent and thriving community. He had been happy much beyond the common lot, and he was by no means without miſgivings at the thought of a change ſo important and deciſive.

Removes to Boſton.

His Succeſs.

His removal, however, proved fortunate beyond his hopes. His profeſſional buſineſs in Boſton, while it was leſs oppreſſive than his buſineſs in Salem had been, inſured him immediately an increaſed and ample income. Into public affairs he entered little, and only ſo far as his duty plainly required; for political life was never agreeable to him, and, beſides this, it interfered with his profeſſional labors and the domeſtic repoſe he always loved and needed. But from 1809 he ſerved for a few years in the Council of the Commonwealth, under Governor Gore and Governor Strong, and enjoyed all the confidence of thoſe eminent and faithful magiſtrates, as they enjoyed all his. In 1814 he was elected, by the Legiſlature of Maſſachuſetts, to be one of the delegates to the Convention which, in that year, met at Hartford, in Connecticut, to conſider the condition of the New England States, expoſed and neglected as they were by the general government, during the war then carrying on againſt Great Britain. It was inconvenient and diſagreeable to him to accept the office. But he had no doubt that he ought to do it. Nor did he ever afterwards regret it, or fail to do juſtice to the honorable and high-minded men who were aſſociated with him in its duties.

Member of the Hartford Convention.

He went to that remarkable Convention, fearing, unqueſtionably, from the great excitement which then prevailed throughout New England on the ſubject

APPENDIX A.

His opinion of the Convention.

of the war, that rash measures, tending to affect the integrity of the Union, might be suggested. But he was present through the whole session, and found his apprehensions entirely groundless. "No such measure," he said, "was ever proposed in the Convention, nor was there," in his opinion deliberately recorded long afterwards, "a member of that body who would have consented to any act, which, in his judgment, would have tended directly or indirectly to destroy or impair the union of the States." If there was ever a man loyal to the constitution and laws under which he lived, it was Mr. Prescott; nor did he deem any one of his associates at Hartford, in this respect, less faithful than himself.

Judge of the Common Pleas.

In 1818 he was appointed Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the City of Boston, and accepted the office, thinking to hold it so as to facilitate his retirement from the practice of his profession. But he found it more laborious and engrossing than he had anticipated, and resigned it at the end of a year.

Member of the Convention for revising the Constitution of Massachusetts.

In 1820 – 21 he served as a delegate from the city of Boston to the Convention for revising the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and, on its first organization, was made chairman of the committee charged with the most difficult and perplexing subject that was submitted to that body for discussion and decision, — the representation of the people in their own government. It was not an enviable post, but, by his wisdom and moderation, by an energy and a firmness that were still always conciliating, and by a power of persuasion that rested on truth, he at last led the Convention to a decision, although, at one critical moment, it had seemed impossible to decide anything. The members of that body, therefore, as distinguished for talent and for personal character as any that was ever assembled in Massachusetts, always felt — even those who had differed from him — that they and the Commonwealth were under lasting obligations to his wisdom and integrity.

Retires from the bar.

He continued at the bar until 1828, making in all above forty years of service to the law. During more than half of that time his practice was as extensive, as honorable, and as successful as that of any member of the profession in the State, which, while he belonged to it, numbered in its ranks such men as Sullivan, Parsons, Dexter, Otis, and Webster, all of whom, except the last, ceased to be members of the bar before he did. During the whole of his professional life he enjoyed, in an eminent degree, the kindly regard and sincere respect of his brethren, and of the different members of the courts before which he was called to practise, no one of whom ever, for a moment, imagined that any spot had fallen on the absolute purity and integrity of his character. Of his distinction as a jurist there was as little doubt. Mr. Daniel Webster, when, with much sensibility, he announced Mr. Prescott's death to the Supreme Court, then in session at Boston, well said of him, that "at the moment of his retirement from the bar of Massachusetts he stood at its head for legal learning and attainments."

His happy old age.

The last sixteen years of his life were spent in the quietness of his home, where his original nature, disencumbered of the cares that had oppressed him during a very busy life, seemed to come forth with the freshness of youth. He

read a great deal, especially on subjects connected with religion, ethics, metaphysics, and history, — all of them sciences of which he never tired. Agriculture, too, the occupation of some of his earlier days, had great charms for him; and he showed no little skill in cultivating the estate on which he was born, and where, during much of his life, and especially the latter part of it, he spent a happy portion of each year. But whether in the city, or at Pepperell, or on the sea-shore at Nahant, where, during many seasons, he passed the hottest weeks of our hot summers, he loved to be surrounded by his family, — his children and his grandchildren; and with them and among his private friends, he found in his declining years what, in the intervals of leisure during his whole life, he had most enjoyed and valued.

Enjoyment of the success of his son.

It was in this happy retirement that there broke in upon him the light which so gilded the mild evening of his days, — the success of his son as an historian, shedding new distinction on a name already dear to his country, and carrying that name far beyond the limits of the language spoken by all who had borne it before him. Mr. Prescott in the innermost circle of his friends never disguised the happiness his son's reputation gave him, although certainly, from the instinctive modesty of his nature, nothing could be more graceful than the way in which he expressed it.

Paralytic affection.

But there is an end to everything earthly. In the autumn of 1843, while at his old home in Pepperell,[8] he had a slight attack of paralysis. He recovered from it, however, easily, and, except to the ever-watchful eyes of affection, seemed fully restored to his wonted health. But he himself understood the warning, and lived, though cheerfully and with much enjoyment of life, yet as one who never forgot that his time must be short, and that his summons could hardly fail to be sudden. In the last days of November, 1844, he felt himself slightly incommoded, — not, as before, in the head, but in the region of the heart. As late, however, as the evening before his death, no change was noticed in his appearance when he retired to bed, nor is it probable that, after a night of his usual comfortable rest, he noticed any change in himself when he rose the next morning. At any rate, he went, as was his custom, quietly and directly to his library. But he had hardly reached it, when he perceived that the messenger of death was at his side. He therefore desired the faithful attendant, who had for many years been attached to his person, not to leave him, and a few moments afterwards, surrounded by the family he so much loved, in the full possession of his faculties, and with a peaceful trust in his Maker and in the blessedness of a future life, he expired without a struggle. It was Sunday, December the 8th, 1844, and on the following Wednesday he was buried in the crypt of St. Paul's Church.

Death.

Mrs. Prescott, mother of the historian.

While he was a young lawyer in Salem, Mr. Prescott was married, December 18th, 1793, to Catherine Greene Hickling, daughter of Thomas Hickling, Esq., earlier a merchant of Boston, but then, and subsequently until his death at the age of ninety-one, Consul of the United States in the island of St. Michael. It was a connection full of blessing to him and to his house during the fifty-one

[8] See *ante*, p. 203.

APPENDIX A.

years that it pleaſed God to permit it to be continued. Few women have done more to relieve their huſbands from the cares of life, and to bear for them even a diſproportionate ſhare of its burdens. Still fewer have, at the ſame time, made their influence felt abroad through ſociety, as ſhe did. But ſhe was full of energy and activity, of health, cheerfulneſs, and the love of doing good. Probably no woman, in the poſition ſhe occupied among us, ever gave her thoughts, her converſation, and her life in ſo remarkable a degree to the welfare of others. When, therefore, ſhe died, May 17th, 1852, nearly eighty-five years old, it is not too much to ſay that her death was mourned as a public loſs.[9]

Children of Mr. and Mrs. Preſcott.

Mr. and Mrs. Preſcott had ſeven children, all of whom were born to them in Salem, between 1795 and 1806, but four died without reaching the age of a ſingle year.

Of the other three the eldeſt was the hiſtorian.

Elizabeth Dexter.

The next was Catharine Elizabeth, who ſtill ſurvives (1862). She was born November 12th, 1779, and was married September 28th, 1819, to Franklin Dexter, ſon of Samuel Dexter, the eminent lawyer and ſtateſman.

Franklin Dexter.

Mr. Franklin Dexter was born in 1793, and, after a careful academical and profeſſional education, and a viſit to the moſt intereſting and cultivated portions of Europe, eſtabliſhed himſelf as a lawyer in Boſton. He roſe early to diſtinction at the bar, and by his courage, his quickneſs of perception, his acute and manly logic, and an intellectual graſp which the ſtrongeſt could not eſcape, he vindicated for himſelf a place in the front rank of a company of eminent men, ſuch as New England had never before ſeen collected. But his taſtes and his preferences led him into paths widely different from theirs. His mind turned inſtinctively to what was refined and beautiful. He loved letters more than law, and art more than letters; ſo that, perhaps without deliberately intending it, he always ſought much of his happineſs in both, and found it. When, therefore, he had reached an age at which, with a conſtitution of only moderate vigor, repoſe became deſirable, and had obtained a fortune equal to the wants of one who never over-eſtimated the worth of what the world moſt deſires, he gave himſelf more and more to the happineſs of domeſtic life and to the purſuit of art, towards which, from an early period, he had — and perhaps rightly — thought his genius more inclined than to any other. But life was not long protracted. He died in 1857, leaving behind him in the minds of his contemporaries a perſuaſion, that, if his ſevere taſte in what related even to his favorite purſuits, and the faſtidious acuteneſs with which he looked quite through the ways of men, and detected the low motives which often lead to power, had not checked him in mid-career, he might have riſen to an eminence where he would have left behind him not a few of the rivals to whom, during the active years of his life, he had willingly yielded the honors of ſucceſs.

Edward Gordon Preſcott.

The only brother of the hiſtorian who lived beyond infancy was Edward Gordon, who was born at Salem, January the 2d, 1804. At a ſuitable age, after the removal of his father to Boſton, he was ſent to the ſame ſchool in which his elder brother had laid the foundation for his diſtinction. But his tendencies were not

9 See *ante*, p. 383.

then towards intellectual culture, and, at his own earneſt deſire, he was placed in a counting-houſe, that he might devote himſelf to mercantile purſuits. A taſte for letters was, however, ſomewhat to his own ſurpriſe, awakened in him a little later; and, with ſudden but earneſt efforts to recover the time that had been loſt, he ſucceeded in obtaining a degree at Harvard College in 1825. Subſequently, he ſtudied law with his father, under the moſt favorable circumſtances; and after 1828, when he began the practice of his profeſſion, he not only took his fair ſhare of the buſineſs of the time, but, as ſo many of his family before him had done, he ſerved the Commonwealth both in its Legiſlature and in its military organization, riſing to the rank of colonel in the militia. This ſeemed for a time to ſatisfy a nature too eager for excitement and diſtinction. But after ſeven years of great activity, a change came over him. He was grown weary of a buſy, buſtling life, full of temptations which he had not always effectually reſiſted. His religious convictions, which from his youth had been ſtrong, if not conſtant, now became paramount. He was pained that he had not better obeyed them, and, after many ſtruggles, he reſolutely determined to give himſelf up to them entirely. And he did it. He began at once a courſe of regular ſtudies for the miniſtry, and in 1837 was ſettled as an Epiſcopalian clergyman in a retired pariſh of New Jerſey, where he devoted himſelf earneſtly to the duties he had aſſumed. But his labors were ſevere, and his health failed under them; ſlowly, indeed, but regularly. Still, no anxiety was felt for the reſult; and when he determined to viſit the Azores, where ſeveral of his mother's family, as we have ſeen, had long reſided, he embarked with every promiſe that the mild climate of thoſe Fortunate Iſles would reſtore the impaired forces of his phyſical conſtitution, and permit him ſoon to reſume the duties he loved. But, on the ſecond day out, a ſudden attack — perhaps apoplectic and certainly one of which there had been no warning ſymptom — broke down his ſtrength at once, and early the next morning, April 11th, 1844, he died without a movement of his perſon, like one falling aſleep, his watch held gently in his hand, as if he had juſt been noting the hour.

After his ſettlement as a clergyman in New Jerſey, he was married to an excellent and devoted wife, who ſurvived him only a few years, but they had no children.

Deſcendants of William Hickling Preſcott.

William Hickling Preſcott, the hiſtorian, as it has already been recorded, has three ſurviving children, viz.: —

1. William Gardiner Preſcott, born January 27, 1826, and named after his father's friend, William Howard Gardiner, Eſq. He was married, November 6, 1851, to Auguſta, daughter of Joſeph Auguſtus Peabody, Eſq., of Salem, and they have four children, —
   Edith, born April 20, 1853,
   William Hickling, born February 22, 1855,
   Linzee, born November 27, 1859,
   Louiſa, born February 19, 1863.
2. Elizabeth, born July 27, 1828, and married, March 16, 1852, to James Lawrence, Eſq., ſon of the late Hon. Abbott Lawrence, Miniſter of the

APPENDIX A.

United States at the Court of St. James from 1849 to 1853. They have three children,—

James, born March 23, 1853,
Gertrude, born February 19, 1855,
Prescott, born January 17, 1861.

3. William Amory, born January 25, 1830, and named after his mother's brother and his father's friend, William Amory, Esq. He is unmarried (1862).

APPENDIX B.

THE CROSSED SWORDS.

(See page 54.)

Colonel William Prescott and Captain John Linzee.

COLONEL WILLIAM PRESCOTT, the grandfather of the historian, died, as has been mentioned, in 1795. Captain John Linzee, grandfather of the historian's wife, was born at Portsmouth, England, in 1743, but, establishing himself in the United States after the war of the Revolution was over, died at Milton, near Boston, in 1798. In process of time, the swords of these two opposing commanders came by transmission and inheritance to the historian, and were by him arranged, first over one of the bookcases in his quiet study in Bedford Street, and afterwards on the cornice of his library in Beacon Street. In either place the sight was a striking one, and generally attracted the attention of strangers. Mr. Thackeray, whose vigilant eye did not fail to notice it when he visited Mr. Prescott in 1852, thus alludes to it very happily in the opening of his "Virginians," published six years later:

"On the library-wall of one of the most famous writers of America there hang two crossed swords, which his relatives wore in the great war of Independence. The one sword was gallantly drawn in the service of the king, the other was the weapon of a brave and honored republican soldier. The possessor of the harmless trophy has earned for himself a name alike honored in his ancestors' country and in his own, where genius like his has always a peaceful welcome."

By the thirteenth article of Mr. Prescott's will he provided for the disposition of these swords as follows:

Mr. Prescott's will.

"The sword which belonged to my grandfather, Colonel William Prescott, worn by him in the battle of Bunker Hill, I give to the Massachusetts Historical Society, as a curiosity suitable to be preserved among their collections; and the sword which belonged to my wife's grandfather, Captain Linzee, of the British Royal Navy, who commanded one of the enemy's ships lying off Charlestown during the same battle, I give to my wife."

As Mrs. Prescott, and the other heirs of Captain Linzee, desired that the swords should not be separated, Mr. Gardiner, who was Mr. Prescott's executor, sent them both to the Historical Society, accompanied by an interesting letter addressed to the Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, its President, and to be found, dated April 19th, 1859, in the volume of the "Proceedings" of that Society published in 1860, pp. 258–264.

Proceedings of the Historical Society.

Resolutions offered by Mr. Winthrop were unanimously adopted, directing the swords to be arranged in a conspicuous place in the halls of the Society,

APPENDIX B. "The Croſſed Swords."

croſſing each other, as they had been croſſed in Mr. Preſcott's library, and with ſuitable inſcriptions ſetting forth their hiſtory and the circumſtances of their reception.

A tablet of black-walnut was, therefore, prepared, to which they now ſtand attached, croſſed through a carved wreath of olive-leaves; while over them are two ſhields, leaning againſt each other, and bearing reſpectively the Preſcott and the Linzee arms.

On the right, next to the hilt of Colonel Preſcott's ſword, is the following inſcription:—

The ſword
of
COLONEL WILLIAM PRESCOTT,
worn by him
while in command of the
Provincial forces
at the
Battle of Bunker Hill,
17 June, 1775,
and
bequeathed to the
Maſſachuſetts Hiſtorical Society
by his grandſon
WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT.

On the left, next to the hilt of Captain Linzee's ſword, is the following inſcription:—

The ſword
of
CAPTAIN JOHN LINZEE, R. N.,
who commanded the
Britiſh ſloop-of-war "Falcon"
while acting againſt the Americans
during the Battle of Bunker Hill,
preſented to the
Maſſachuſetts Hiſtorical Society,
14 April, 1859,
by his grandchildren
THOMAS C. A. LINZEE
and
MRS. WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT.

On two ſeparate ſcrolls is the following inſcription:

Theſe ſwords
for many years were hung croſſed
in the library
of the late eminent hiſtorian
WILLIAM HICKLING PRESCOTT,
in token of
international friendſhip
and
family alliance.

They
are now preſerved
in a ſimilar poſition
by the
MASS. HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
in memory
of the aſſociations
with which they will be
inſeparably connected.

Poem of Rev. Dr. Frothingham.

On the evening of Thurſday, April 28, 1859, at a meeting of the Society, held at the houſe of its Preſident, the Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, the Rev. Dr. N. L. Frothingham — who, at the ſpecial meeting of the Society, called together by the death of the hiſtorian, had in apt and beautiful words offered an affectionate tribute to the character of his friend and pariſhioner — read the following lines, which, in words no leſs apt and touching, give the poetical interpretation of

THE CROSSED SWORDS.

Swords croſſed, — but not in ſtrife!
The chiefs who drew them, parted by the ſpace
Of two proud countries' quarrel, face to face
Ne'er ſtood for death or life.

Swords croſſed, that never met
While nerve was in the hands that wielded them;
Hands better deſtined a fair family ſtem
On theſe free ſhores to ſet.

Kept croſſed by gentleſt bands!
Emblems no more of battle, but of peace;
And proof how loves can grow and wars can ceaſe,
Their once ſtern ſymbol ſtands.

It ſmiled firſt on the array
Of marſhalled books and friendlieſt companies;
And here, a hiſtory among hiſtories,
It ſtill ſhall ſmile for aye.

See that thou memory keep,
Of him the firm commander; and that other,
The ſtainleſs judge; and him our peerleſs brother, —
All fallen now aſleep.

Yet more: a leſſon teach,
To cheer the patriot-ſoldier in his courſe,
That Right ſhall triumph ſtill o'er inſolent Force:
That be your ſilent ſpeech.

Oh, be prophetic too!
And may thoſe nations twain, as ſign and ſeal
Of endleſs amity, hang up their ſteel,
As we theſe weapons do!

The archives of the Paſt,
So ſmeared with blots of hate and bloody wrong,
Pining for peace, and ſick to wait ſo long,
Hail this meek croſs at laſt.

And ſo was fitly cloſed up the hiſtory of this ſingular trophy, if trophy that can be called which was won from no enemy, and which is a memento at once of a defeat that was full of glory, and of triumphs in the field of letters more brilliant than thoſe in the fields of war.

APPENDIX C.

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER ADDRESSED BY MR. EDMUND B. OTIS, FORMERLY MR. PRESCOTT'S SECRETARY, TO MR. TICKNOR.

(See p. 232, note.)

Boſton, June 4th, 1859.

MY DEAR SIR,

. . . . . .

APPENDIX C.

Firſt acquaintance with Mr. Preſcott.

I well recollect the firſt interview I had with the author of "Ferdinand and Iſabella." I viſited him at his library in his father's houſe in Bedford Street, where he reſided in the ſummer of 1841. I had previouſly read his Hiſtory, and had copied, when a Sophomore, ſeveral of the cloſing chapters of the work, by way of a voluntary rhetorical exerciſe, as I admired the purity and beauty of his ſtyle, little thinking, at the time, that it would be my fate to copy ſeveral volumes of his ſubſequent compoſitions. I had heard that he was blind; and, from the nature and amount of his hiſtorical lore, I had expected to ſee an old gentleman, ſomewhat the worſe for wear. My ſurpriſe was very great when I was greeted by a tall, handſome man, in the prime of life, who did not appear to me over thirty years of age, although at that time he muſt have been about forty-five. He ſeemed amuſed at the ſurpriſe, which I did not probably entirely conceal, and aſked me if I had not expected to find him halt, lame, and maimed, as well as blind.

. . . . . .

Literary hiſtory.

He was more ſtrongly attracted, he told me, to civil than to literary hiſtory, as his audience would be ſo much larger; — the literary hiſtorian, neceſſarily, in a great meaſure, addreſſing himſelf to ſcholars, who may alone be ſuppoſed to be deeply intereſted in his ſubject, and who alone are competent to decide upon his merit, while the civil hiſtorian has the world for his audience, and may intereſt every man who has civil or religious rights and liberties to ſtudy and defend. This was the ſubſtance of the firſt converſation I ever had with Mr. Preſcott, though, at this diſtance of time, I do not attempt to report his exact language.

. . . . . .

Regularity of his life.

Although he enjoyed the variety of a ſea-ſhore, country, and city life, there was a uniformity, regularity, and order in his mode and habit of living, that I have never ſeen equalled by any other man. One day was very much the counterpart of another; and I ſometimes thought that he had reduced life to ſuch a ſyſtem, and regulated his every action ſo much by rule, that there was danger of merging volition in a mechanical, clock-work exiſtence, and loſing liberty in the race for knowledge and fame.

. . . . . .

This regularity and uniformity of life were undoubtedly neceſſary for the preſervation of his health, and the performance of his ſelf-impoſed literary taſks.

. . . . . .

Modes of work.

Mr. Preſcott has given ſome account, in the Preface to his "Hiſtory of the Conqueſt of Peru," and, I believe, in the Prefaces to his other works, of the nature and degree of his impaired viſion, of his uſe of a *noctograph* or writing-caſe for the blind, and of the general duties of his ſecretary, with all of which you muſt be familiar; but perhaps it may not be without intereſt, if I give from memory a brief ſketch of his mode of writing a chapter of hiſtory.

Makes outlines of his ſubjects.

It was the habit of Mr. Preſcott, as you are aware, to ſtudy the grand outlines of his ſubject, and to plan the general arrangement and proportions of his work, — claſſifying the various topics he would have to treat, and dividing them into books and chapters, — before ſtudying them cloſely in detail, when preparing to compoſe a chapter. When he had decided upon the ſubject to be diſcuſſed, or events to be related in a particular chapter, he carefully read all that portion of his authorities, in print and manuſcript, bearing on the ſubject of the chapter in hand, uſing tables of contents and indices, and taking copious notes of each authority as he read, marking the volume and page of each ſtatement for future reference. Theſe notes I copied in a large, legible hand, ſo that, at times, he could read them, though more frequently I read them aloud to him, until he had impreſſed them completely on his memory. After this had been accompliſhed, he would occupy ſeveral days in ſilently digeſting this mental provender, balancing the conflicting teſtimony of authorities, arranging the details of his narrative, ſelecting his ornaments, rounding his periods, and moulding the whole chapter in his mind, as an orator might prepare his ſpeech. Many of his beſt battle-ſcenes, he told me, he had compoſed while on horſeback. His vivid imagination carried him back to the ſixteenth century, and he almoſt felt himſelf a Caſtilian knight, charging with Cortés, Sandóval, and Alvarado on the Aztec foe.

Notes.

Mental compoſition.

Written down by his noctograph.

When he had fully prepared his chapter in his mind, he began to daſh it off with rapidity by the uſe of his writing-caſe. As he did not ſee his paper when he wrote, he ſometimes wrote twice over the ſame lines, which did not have a tendency to render them more legible. His uſual fluency of compoſition was ſometimes interrupted, not by a dearth, but by too great copiouſneſs of expreſſion, ſeveral ſynonymous phraſes or parallel forms of ſpeech preſenting themſelves at once. All theſe he wrote down, one after the other, in duplicate, to be weighed and criticiſed at leiſure, not waiting to ſettle the difficulty at the time, fearing that by delay he might loſe the eaſe of ſtyle which uſually accompanies rapidity of compoſition. When beginning to deſcribe a battle, he would often, to rouſe his military enthuſiaſm, as he ſaid, hum to himſelf his favorite air, "O give me but my Arab ſteed," &c.

. . . . . .

Corrected.

As the ſheets were ſtricken off, I deciphered them, and was ready to read them to him when he had finiſhed the chapter. He was as cautious in correction as he was rapid in writing. Each word and ſentence was carefully weighed, and

APPENDIX C. Letter of Mr. Edmund B. Otis.

ſubjected to the cloſeſt analyſis. If found wanting in ſtrength or beauty, it was changed and turned until the exact expreſſion required was found, when he dictated the correction, which was made by me on his manuſcript. He allowed nothing to remain, however beautiful in itſelf, which he did not think added to the beauty and ſtrength of the whole. He hated fine writing, merely as fine writing. I have known him mercileſſly to ſtrike out ſeveral pages of beautiful imagery, which he believed on reflection had a tendency rather to weaken than enhance the effect he deſired to produce.

Copied.

After the chapter had been thus carefully corrected, I copied it in a large, heavy, pike-ſtaff hand, that thoſe who run might read. I had to acquire the hand for the occaſion, and my practice in that line may account for my preſent legible, but ſomewhat inelegant chirography. When the chapter was copied in this large hand, Mr. Preſcott re-peruſed and re-corrected it. He then read again my copy of the original notes that he had taken from the authorities on which he founded his chapter, and from them prepared the remarks, quotations, and references found in his foot-notes, which were alſo uſually rapidly ſtricken off with his writing-caſe, and copied by me in the ſame large, legible hand with the text. This copy was again and again carefully ſcrutinized and corrected by himſelf.

Mr. Preſcott believed that an hiſtorian could not be too careful in guarding againſt inaccuracies. I recollect that, when he had finiſhed the "Hiſtory of the Conqueſt of Mexico," the whole manuſcript was ſubmitted to yourſelf for critical ſuggeſtions and corrections, the value of which he acknowledges in his Preface. When the manuſcript was ſent to preſs, before the plates were ſtereotyped, the printed ſheets were ſent to the author, for his final corrections, beſides being ſubjected to the careful inſpection of Mr. Nichols, the corrector of the Cambridge preſs, and to the ſharp eye of Mr. Charles Folſom, whoſe critical acumen Mr. Preſcott fully appreciated.

Final care.

Love of his books.

Mr. Preſcott loved his books almoſt as he loved his children; he liked to ſee them well dreſſed, in rich, ſubſtantial bindings, and if one, by any accident, was dropped, "it annoyed him," he ſaid jeſtingly, "almoſt as much as if a baby fell."

APPENDIX D.

LITERARY HONORS.

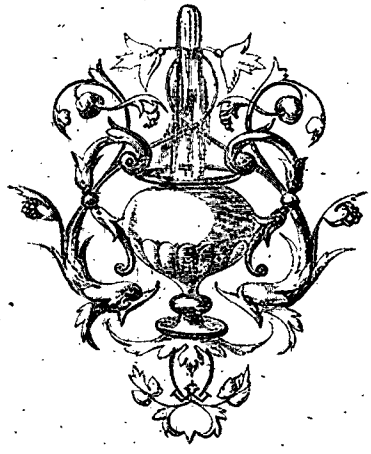
(See p. 240, note.)

FROM the time when, in 1838, Mr. Prescott's reputation "burst out into sudden blaze," literary honors of all kinds awaited him in profusion, both at home and abroad. I will give here a list of the more considerable of them in the order of time.

1838. Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.
Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence.
1839. Royal Academy of History, Madrid.
Royal Academy of Sciences, Naples.
American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.
New York Historical Society, New York city.
Georgia Historical Society, Savannah.
New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord.
1840. American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Boston.
Literary and Historical Society of Quebec.
1841. Herculaneum Academy, Naples.
Doctor of Laws, Columbia College, South Carolina.
1842. Kentucky Historical Society, Louisville.
1843. Doctor of Laws, Harvard College, Massachusetts.
Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.
1844. Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.
National Institute, Washington, D. C.
1845. French Institute, Academy of Moral Sciences, Paris.
Royal Society of Berlin.
1846. New Jersey Historical Society, Princeton.
1847. Royal Society of Literature, London.
New England Historic-Genealogical Society, Boston.
1848. Doctor of Laws, Columbian College, Washington, D. C.
1850. Doctor of Civil Law, Oxford, England.
1851. Mexican Society of Geography and Statistics, Mexico.
1852. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.
1854. Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.
1856. Historical Society of Florida, St. Augustine.
Historical Society of Iowa, Burlington.
1857. Historical Society of Tennessee, Nashville.

APPENDIX D. Literary honors.

He received the honors of membership from several societies of young men in different parts of the country, two or three of which, like a debating-society at Cambridge, a literary association at Philadelphia, and one at Marysville, Kentucky, took his name. He was not insensible to such marks of regard from those who, in the coming generation, are to be a part of the voice of posterity.



APPENDIX E.

TRANSLATIONS OF MR. PRESCOTT'S HISTORIES.

I. Spanish.

HISTORIA del Reinado de los Reyes Catolicos, D. Fernando y Dª. Iſabel, eſcrita en Inglés por William H. Preſcott, traducida del Original por D. Pedro Sabau y Larroya. 4 tom. 8vo. Madrid, Rivadeneyra, 1845, 1846.

Hiſtoria de la Conquiſta de Mejico con una Reſeña preliminar de la Civilizacion antigua Mejicana y la Vida del Conquiſtador, Hernan Cortés, eſcrita en Inglés por William Preſcott (ſic), y traducida del Original por D. J. B. de Beratarrechea. 3 tom. 8vo. Madrid, Rivadeneyra, 1847.

Hiſtoria de la Conquiſta de México con una Ojeada preliminar ſobre la antigua Civilizacion de los Mexicanos y con la Vida de ſu Conquiſtador, Fernando Cortés. Eſcrita en Inglés por W. Preſcott (ſic), y traducida al Eſpañol por Joaquin Navarro. 3 tom. 8vo. México, impreſo por Ignacio Cumplido, editor de eſta Obra, 1844–6.

The ſecond volume contains one hundred and twenty-four pages of notes on the whole work, by D. Joſé F. Ramirez, and the third conſiſts of ſeventy-one lithographic prints of the antiquities of Mexico, portraits of perſons who have figured in its hiſtory, &c., with explanations to illuſtrate them, by D. Iſidro R. Gondra, head of the Mexican Muſeum.

Hiſtoria de la Conquiſta de Méjico con un Boſquejo preliminar de la Civilizacion de los antiguos Mejicanos y la Vida de ſu Conquiſtador, Hernando Cortés, eſcrita en Inglés por Guillermo H. Preſcott, Autor de la "Hiſtoria de Fernando e Iſabel," traducida al Caſtellano por D. Joſé Maria Gonzalez de la Vega, Segundo Fiſcal del Tribunal Superior del Departamento de Mejico, y anotada por D. Lucas Alaman. 2 tom. 8vo grande. Méjico, imprenta de V. G. Torres, 1844.

I have imperfect notices of the following tranſlations into Spaniſh: —

Hiſtoria de los Reyes Católicos por Guillermo Preſcot (ſic), traducida por D. Atiliano Calvo. Edicion iluſtrada con buenos grabados que repreſentan diverſos paſages, viſtas y retratos de los mas célebres perſonages. 1 tomo. 4to.

Hiſtoria del Deſcubrimiento y Conquiſta del Perú, con Obſervaciones preliminares ſobre la Civilizacion de los Incas. 2 tom. 8vo. Madrid.

There is alſo a tranſlation of the "Hiſtory of Philip the Second," but it is, perhaps, not yet all publiſhed.

APPENDIX E. Tranſlations.

II. FRENCH.

French.

Hiſtoire du Règne de Ferdinand et d'Iſabelle, traduite de l'Anglais de Guillaume H. Preſcott, par J. Renſon et P. Ithier. 4 vol. 8vo. Paris et Bruxelles, Didot, 1860, 1861.

Hiſtoire de la Conquête du Méxique, avec un tableau préliminaire de l'ancienne Civiliſation Méxicaine, et la Vie de Fernand Cortés, par William H. Preſcott, publiée en Français par Amedée Pichot. 3 vol. 8vo. Paris, F. Didot, 1846.

Hiſtoire de la Conquête du Pérou, précédée d'un Tableau de la Civiliſation des Incas, par W. H. Preſcott, traduite de l'Anglais par H. Poret. 3 vol. 8vo. Paris, F. Didot, 1860.

Hiſtoire du Règne de Philippe Second, par Guillaume H. Preſcott, traduite de l'Anglais par G. Renſon et P. Ithier. Tomes I. et II. Paris, F. Didot, 1860.

Don Carlos, ſa Vie et ſa Mort, par W. H. Preſcott, traduite de l'Anglais par G. Renſon. 8vo. Bruxelles, Van Meneen et Cie, 1860.

III. ITALIAN.

Italian.

Storia del Regno di Ferdinando e Iſabella, Sovrani Cattolici di Spagna, di H. Preſcott (ſic), recato per prima volta in Italiano da Aſcanio Tempeſtini. 3 tom. 8vo. Firenze, per V. Batelli e Compagni, 1847, 1848.

A notice of the original work by the Marquis Gino Capponi, who took much intereſt in having it tranſlated, may be found in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," Tom II., 1845; Appendice, p. 606.

A portion of the "Hiſtory of the Conqueſt of Peru" was tranſlated into Italian and publiſhed at Florence in 1855 and 1856, in two parts, but it was made from the Spaniſh verſion and not from the original Engliſh. The firſt is entitled, "Compendio delle Notizie generali ſul Perú avanti la Conquiſta, ec., tratte dalla Storia di Guglielmo Preſcott, e recate in Italiano da C[eſare] M[agherini]." 8vo. Firenze, Tipografia Galileiana, 1855. The other part is entitled, "Scoperta e Conquiſta del Peru, ſtoria di Guglielmo Preſcott, tradotta da C[eſare] M[agherini]." 8vo. Firenze, Tipografia Galileiana, 1856. This laſt tranſlation ſtops at the year 1551, the year of Gonzalvo Pizarro's death.

IV. GERMAN.

German.

Geſchichte der Regierung Ferdinand's und Iſabella's der Katholiſchen von Spanien. Von William H. Preſcott. Aus dem Engliſchen überſetzt [von H. Eberty]. 2 Bände. 8vo. Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1842.

Geſchichte der Eroberung von Mexico, mit einer einleitenden Ueberſicht des früheren mexicaniſchen Bildungszuſtandes und dem Leben des Eroberers, Her-

nando Cortez. Von William H. Prescott. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt [von H. Eberty]. 2 Bande. 8vo. Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1845.

Geschichte der Eroberung von Peru, mit einer einleitenden Uebersicht des Bildungszustandes unter den Inkas. Von William H. Prescott. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt [von H. Eberty]. 2 Bände. 8vo. Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1848.

Geschichte Philipp's des Zweiten, von William H. Prescott. Deutsch von Joh. Scherr. 8vo. Theil I.–III. Leipzig, O. Wigand, 1856, sqq.

Das Klosterleben Carl's des Fünften, von W. H. Prescott. Aus dem Englischen von Julius Seybel. 8vo. Leipzig, Lorck, 1857.

This last constitutes the twenty-third volume of Lorck's "Conversations- und Reise-Bibliothek."

V. DUTCH.

Dutch.

Zeden, Gewoonten en Regeringsvorm in Peru vóór de Komst der Spanjaarden, geschetst door W. H. Prescott, uit het Engelsch vertaald door Mr. G. Mees, Az. 8vo. pp. 162. Amsterdam, P. Kraij, Junior, 1849.

This is a translation of the first book of the "History of the Conquest of Peru," omitting a considerable number of the notes.

All the historical works of Mr. Prescott, in the original English, have been reprinted both in Paris and in Leipzig; and, I believe, other translations have been made of some of them, notices of which I have failed to obtain. The "History of Ferdinand and Isabella" is said to have appeared in Dutch and Russian, but I have no distinct account of either.

APPENDIX F.

CONVERSATION OF MR. PRESCOTT SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH.

THE laſt printed notice of Mr. Preſcott and of his converſation is a very intereſting one, by the Reverend William H. Milburn; of New York, the blind, or nearly blind, friend of whom Mr. Preſcott ſpeaks more than once in his letters. From their common misfortune they had a ſtrong ſympathy with each other; and Mr. Milburn, having chanced to viſit the hiſtorian, the evening but one before the day of his death, wrote an account of his interview immediately afterwards to the Meſſrs. Harpers for their "Weekly," February 12th, 1859.

Infirmity of Mr. Preſcott.

"On the evening in queſtion," ſays Mr. Milburn, "Wedneſday, January 26th, Mr. Preſcott entered the library with a ſlower and heavier ſtep than when I had been in the habit of ſeeing him years before; but his manner had the ſame unaffected ſimplicity and cordial warmth. Whether a ſtranger would have perceived it I cannot ſay, but my ear, ſharpened by neceſſity, at once detected the work of paralyſis in an occaſional thickening of the ſpeech, — I mean, a difficulty in perfect articulation now and then. Among his very firſt inquiries was a particular one concerning the members of your own firm, — your health, the ſtate and proſpects of your buſineſs, &c., manifeſting the deepeſt intereſt; adding the remark that, through all the years of his buſineſs and perſonal connection with your firm, he had never experienced anything but the greateſt kindneſs and conſideration at your hands; that his enjoyment of your ſucceſs was undiminiſhed; and that he felt particularly grateful for the kindly mention which had been made of his perſonal affliction laſt year in your paper, and for the handſome notice of the third volume of his 'Philip the Second' in the current number of your 'Magazine.'

Friends.

"He then proceeded to a mention of various mutual friends that had paſſed away ſince our laſt meeting, eſpecially of the Hon. Abbott Lawrence and Mr. Francis C. Gray, at whoſe dinner-tables we had often met; and then of ſome of his ſurviving friends, eſpecially of Mr. Ticknor, who, he ſaid, had ſhortened and brightened what, but for him, muſt have been many a ſad and weary hour; and of Mr. Agaſſiz, concerning whoſe Muſeum he expreſſed the livelieſt intereſt. He remarked that the eyes of the latter had ſuffered greatly from his work, and that he would be ſadly balked in his proſpects, but that he was able to find relief in manifold manipulating labors. This led him naturally to ſpeak of his own and my infirmity, which were about equal in degree, and of the different lives we had led; — his, of retired ſtudy; mine, of travel and active toil.

Agaſſiz.

"He added: 'I ſuppoſe that Ticknor will never write another book; but he has been doing perhaps better for the community and poſterity by devoting himſelf for ſeveral years to the intereſts of the Boſton City Library, which may be taken in good part as his work, — and a more valuable contribution to the good of the people has ſeldom been made. It is a rare thing for ſuch an inſtitution to get a man ſo qualified by taſte, knowledge, and accompliſhment to look after its intereſts with ſuch energy and patience.'

Francis C. Gray.

"Of Mr. Gray he obſerved: 'Poor Gray! I think he was the moſt remarkable man I ever knew for variety and fulneſs of information, and a perfect command of it. He was a walking Encyclopædia. I have ſeen many men who had excellent memories, provided you would let them turn to their libraries to get the information you wanted; but, no matter on what ſubject you ſpoke to him, his knowledge was at his fingers'-ends, and entirely at your ſervice.'

Lady Lyell.

"He then led the converſation to his Engliſh friends, to ſome of whom he had given me letters on my recent viſit to that country. He firſt ſpoke of Lady Lyell, the wife of the celebrated geologiſt. 'She is one of the moſt charming people I have ever ſeen,' he ſaid. 'When ſhe married Sir Charles, ſhe knew nothing of geology; but, finding that her life was to be paſſed among ſtones, ſhe ſet herſelf to work to make friends of them, and has done ſo to perfection. She is in thorough ſympathy with all her huſband's reſearches and works; is the companion of his journeys; oftentimes his amanuenſis, for her hand has written ſeveral of his books; and the delight and cheer of his whole life. Unaffected, genial, accompliſhed, and delightful to an almoſt unequalled extent, ſhe is one of the rareſt women you can meet. And,' he continued, 'you ſaw my friend Dean Milman. What an admirable perſon he is! I had a letter from him only a day or two ſince, in which he gave an intereſting account of the opening of his Cathedral, St. Paul's, to the popular Sunday-evening preachings, — a matter which has enliſted all the ſympathies of the Biſhop of London and of himſelf. He has been a prodigiouſly hard worker, and ſo has acquired a prematurely old look. Accompliſhed as hiſtorian, divine, poet, and man of letters, he is at the ſame time among the moſt agreeable and finiſhed men of ſociety I ſaw in England.'

Dean Milman.

Dean Trench.

"'Did you ſee Dean Trench?' he proceeded. Upon my replying in the affirmative, he added: 'I am ſorry never to have ſeen him; I have heard ſuch pleaſant things concerning him. He did me the favor ſome time ſince to ſend me his "Calderon," which I enjoyed greatly.' Replying in the negative to my inquiry as to whether he had read the Dean's books on 'Words,' &c., he ſaid, 'They ſhall be the very next books I read.'

England.

"'England 's a glorious country,' he ſaid, 'is n't it? What a hearty and noble people they are, and how an American's heart warms toward them after he has been there once, and found them out in their hoſpitable homes!'

Mr. Preſcott's homes.

"I ſaid: 'Mr. Preſcott, are n't you coming to New York? We ſhould all be very glad to ſee you there.' 'No,' he replied, 'I ſuppoſe that the days of my long journeys are over. I muſt content myſelf, like Horace, with my three houſes. You know I go at the commencement of ſummer to my cottage by the ſeaſide at Lynn Beach, and in autumn to my patrimonial acres at Pepperell,

APPENDIX F. Rev. Mr. Milburn's letter.

which have been in our family for two hundred years, to ſit under the old trees I ſat under when a boy; and then, with winter, come to town to hibernate in this houſe. This is the only travelling, I ſuppoſe, that I ſhall do until I go to my long home. Do you remember the delightful ſummer you ſpent with us at Lynn, two or three years ago? I wiſh you would come and repeat it next ſummer.'

His imperfect ſight.

"In another part of the converſation he ſaid: 'Theſe men with eyes have us at a ſerious diſadvantage, have n't they? While they run, we can only limp. But I have nothing to complain of, nor have you; Providence has ſingularly taken care of us both, and, by compenſation, keeps the balance even.'

His apoplexy.

"He then ſpoke with entire calmneſs of the ſhock which his ſyſtem had received from his firſt ſtroke of apoplexy laſt year; ſaid that it had weakened him a good deal; but he was very grateful that he was able to take exerciſe, although confined to a ſpare diet, and not allowed to touch meat or anything of a ſtimulative kind; and managed, moreover, to keep up his literary labors. 'I have always made my literary purſuits,' he ſaid, 'a pleaſure rather than a toil; and hope to do ſo with the remainder of "Philip," as I am yet able to work two or three, and ſometimes more, hours a day.' He ſtated that his eye had ſuffered conſiderably from the blow, and, while we talked, he found it neceſſary to ſhade his face. In the courſe of the converſation we were joined by the ladies of the family, Mrs. Preſcott, her ſiſter, his daughter, and daughter-in-law. He then

His gratitude.

ſpoke in glowing and grateful terms, as I alluded to the intereſt taken in his health throughout the country, of the kindneſs which he had invariably experienced at the hands of his countrymen. 'I can never,' he ſaid, 'be ſufficiently grateful for the tokens of eſteem, regard, and affection which I have had *from* them through all the years of my literary career. True, it makes *me feel* like an old man to ſee my fifteen volumes upon the ſhelf, but my *heart* is as young as it ever was to enjoy the love which the country has ever ſhown me.' When I ſaid it was a cheering thing for a man to *know he had given* ſo much happineſs as he had done by his books, he ſaid that it was his own trueſt happineſs to truſt that he had been able to confer it. He ſaid he hoped to live to finiſh 'Philip,' which was now three fifths done. As I bade him good by, I ſaid, 'God bleſs you, Mr. Preſcott; I know I breathe the prayer of the country when I ſay, May your life be ſpared for many years, to add volume after volume to the fifteen.' He rejoined, 'My greateſt delight is the love of my friends and their appreciation of my labors.'

"Little did I think that the hand which ſo warmly graſped mine as he led me down the ſtairs would, ere eight and forty hours were paſt, be cold and ſtiff in death. Peace to the memory of one of the ſweeteſt and nobleſt men that ever lived!

"Yours very truly,

"WILLIAM H. MILBURN."

APPENDIX G.

ON HIS DEATH.

SOON after Mr. Prescott's death I received many notes and letters, expressive of affection and admiration for him. From among them I select the following.

The first is by Mr. George Lunt, who was his secretary in 1825–6, and knew him well. See *ante*, p. 81.

ON A LATE LOSS.

Imitation of Horace, by Mr. Lunt.

IMITATION OF HORACE, LIB. I. OD. XXIV.

Quis desiderio sit pudor, &c.

What time can bring relief—
What blame reprove our grief?
The well-beloved lies low!
The funeral strains prolong,
O Muse of tragic song,
With liquid voice and harp attuned to woe!

Does, then, perpetual sleep
Hold him? and bid us weep
In vain to seek through earth
For honor so unstained,
Such manly truth maintained,
Such glory won and worn by modest worth?

By all the good deplored,
No tears sincerer poured,
Than fell thine own, O friend!
Yet pious thou in vain,
Claiming for earth again
Gifts, which kind Heaven on no such terms will lend.

No fond desires avail,
Friendship's deep want must fail,
Even love's devout demand;
Inexorable Death,
Pledges of deathless faith,
Keeps souls once gathered to the shadowy land.

APPENDIX G.

And oftenest to that bourne
They pass, nor more return, —
The best we miss the most;
Hard seems the stroke of fate,
But Heaven bids us wait,
And there, at last, rejoin the loved, the lost.

Another short poem came anonymously to my door, but was afterwards ascertained to have been written by the Rev. George Richards, then a clergyman of Boston. It was founded upon some remarks made by me at the meeting of the Historical Society, February 1st, on the occasion of Mr. Prescott's death, concerning his wish, that, previous to their final deposit in the house appointed for all living, his remains might rest for a time in his library, under the shadow, as it were, of the books he had so much loved; the remarks being nearly the same with those about the same circumstance in the account given, at page 444, of his last days and burial.

Mr. Richards entitled his poem

Poem by the Rev. Geo. Richards.

THE HISTORIAN IN HIS LIBRARY.

His wish fulfilled! 'T is done, as he had said:
Borne sadly back, with slow and reverent tread; —
Now closeted, — the dead with kindred dead.

Ye need not listen, — no low-whispered word
From that hushed conclave will be overheard;
Nor start, — as if the shrouded sleeper stirred.

He rests, where he hath toiled: the busy pen
Misses the busier brain; nor plods, as when
It traced the lore of that far-searching ken.

He lies amid his peers; the storied great
Look down upon him, here reclined in state, —
As mute as they who speechless round him wait.

His task is done; his working-day is o'er;
The morning larum wakens him no more, —
Unheard its summons, on that silent shore.

The pomp of Kings, the Incas' faded pride,
The freighted bark, the lonely ocean wide,
Dread war, glad peace, no more his thoughts divide.

He lies, like warrior, after set of sun,
Stretched on the plain where his great deeds were done,
Where he the green, immortal garland won.

Round him the relics of the hard-fought field,
Helmet and lance and unavailing shield,
And well-proved blade he never more shall wield.

So leave him, for a while, in that still room,
His books among; — its sober, twilight gloom
Fit prelude to the stiller, darker tomb.

The last of these tokens that I shall cite is from one of the most faithful and valued of his English friends. It is

FROM DEAN MILMAN.

Deanery, St. Paul's, February 19th, [1859].

Letter of Dean Milman.

My dear Mr. Ticknor,

I must unburden myself to some one of the profound sorrow which I (I should have written *we*) feel for our irreparable loss. I have had the happiness to form and retain the friendship of many excellent men; no one has ever, considering the short personal intercourse which I enjoyed with him, and our but occasional correspondence, wakened such strong and lasting attachment. He found his way at once to my heart, and has there remained, and ever will remain, during the brief period to which I can now look forward, as an object of the warmest esteem and affection. I think I should have loved the man if I had only known him as an author; his personal society only showed his cordial, liberal, gentle character in a more distinct and intimate form. That which was admiration became love. There is here but one feeling, among those who had not the good fortune to know him, as among those who knew him best, — deep regret for a man who did honor to the literature of our common language, and whose writings, from their intrinsic charm and excellence, were most popular, without any art or attempt to win popularity.

The suddenness of the blow aggravates its heaviness. I had written to him but a few weeks ago, (I doubt not that he received my letter,) expressing the common admiration with which his last volume was received here by all whose opinion he and his most discerning friends would think of the highest value. In one respect he has ended well, for he never surpassed passages in the last volume; but it is sad to think that he has ended, and left his work incomplete. I can hardly hope that much can be left finished by his hand; if anything is left, I trust it will pass into the hand of him best qualified to shape and mould it into form, *yourself*. As I feel that I can express our sorrows to no one so fitly as to you, so there is no one to whom the sacred memory of our friend can be intrusted with equal confidence. From all that I have heard, his end (premature as our affection cannot but think it) was painless and peaceful; and if — as surely we may trust — the possession and the devotion of such admirable gifts to their best uses, — the promotion of knowledge, humanity, charity, in its widest sense; if a life, I fully believe, perfectly blameless, the discharge of all domestic

Appendix G.

duties ſo as to ſecure the tendereſt attachment of all around; if a calm, quiet, gentle, tolerant faith will juſtify — as no doubt they may — our earneſt hopes; it is that better *peace* which has no end.

Both Mrs. Milman and I truſt you will undertake the friendly office of communicating our common ſorrow to thoſe whoſe ſorrow muſt be more pungent than ours, though, I venture to ſay, not more ſincere. We ſhall always think with warm intereſt of all thoſe who bear the honored name of Preſcott, or were connected by ties of kindred or affection with him. And permit me to add to yourſelf our kindeſt condolence, our beſt wiſhes, and our hopes that we may ſee you again, and ſoon, in Europe.

Believe me, my dear Mr. Ticknor,

Ever your ſincere friend,

H. H. Milman.

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